Migrant Parents, Mexican-Americans, and Transnational Citizenship, 1920s to 1940s

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ABSTRACT

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The Mexican Revolution and WWI spurred the first large wave of Mexican migration to the U.S. As a result, the 1920s and 1930s witnessed the largest cohort of children of Mexican migrants of the twentieth century. A significant percentage of these children were U.S. citizens by birth and were also granted Mexican citizenship through their parents, who generally did not seek to become U.S. citizens through naturalization. Using archival collections in Mexico and the United States, this dissertation examines the formal practices and strategies that these migrant families used to engage both U.S. and Mexican citizenship and navigate their place in both nations. It shows that the practice of citizenship was a multi-sited and transnational historical process as evidenced by an examination of two key areas in which it occurred. First, this dissertation uses education to show that Mexican parents and youth practiced Mexican citizenship from the United States. From 1924 to 1939, migrant parents and organizations, Mexican consuls, and the Secretary of Public Education established schools for migrant children in the United States. In addition, Mexicans in the United States pushed the Mexican government to create scholarships for U.S.-born youth at two Mexican universities in 1939 and 1945. Second, this dissertation provides new interpretations of repatriation by focusing on the relationship between repatriates and Mexican state, the role of the family during the Great Depression, and efforts by U.S.-born youth to claim and benefit from their status as U.S. citizens.

By following migrant families across the U.S.-Mexico border, this dissertation is able to compare the ways in which migrants and U.S.-born youth engaged both the U.S. and Mexican states. Indeed, they deployed a similar set of strategies and language. For example, in both Mexico

and the United States, Mexicans visited the consuls. While the consuls did not always provide Mexicans with the resources they needed, they were often important intermediaries between migrants and the state and between migrants and family members in either Mexico and the United States. In addition to visiting consul, Mexicans wrote to government officials, especially the presidents of both the Mexican and U.S. nation. Their countless letters, I show, emphasized their citizenship status, their affinity to the nation, their "Americanness" or "Mexicanness," and their commitment to contribute to the nation. Moreover, in their letters, Mexicans echoed the nation's patriarchal values and metaphor of the family.

In constructing a transnational history of citizenship, this dissertation bridges and contributes to Chicano/a historiography, scholarship on Mexican nation building, and works on Mexican repatriation during the Great Depression. By including migrant families into the process of Mexican nation-building after the Mexican Revolution, I integrate a set of historical actors that have generally been excluded from Mexican historiography. Placing migrants and migrant children within this context contributes to Chicano/a historiography by demonstrating not only that Mexican citizenship mattered for these families, but that it was a negotiated process that included migrants and the Mexican state.

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Acknowledgements

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For my father,

who would have enjoyed learning about these migrant families

and watching me finish the dissertation.

Introduction

On January 5, 1931 the Confederation of Mexican Societies, a coalition of migrant organization based in Los Angeles sent a memorandum to Mexico's Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Secretary of Foreign Relations, hereafter SRE). "Within our colony," they wrote, "there exist the most serious problems to solve." Migrants from this organization were concerned with labor rights, the Great Depression, and the place of migrants and U.S.-born children in the U.S. nation. Their letter noted the many ways in which migrant families experienced discrimination:

> In this country, Mexicans, because of their brown color, suffer all types of humiliations: property owners do not rent homes to them; [we] are prohibited from entering theaters; [our] children are segregated in [public] schools; prohibited from entering parks, pools, dances, [and] beaches...However, Mexican children born here, when they turn eighteen….are sent to the war.[1]

For these migrants, the only way to resolve the manner in which Mexicans were treated was to create a treaty that "clearly defines the nationality of Mexicans born here."[2] In short, migrants hoped that the Mexican state could correct the United States' contradictory treatment of Mexican migrants and migrant children who were born in the United States.

An official from the SRE informed the Confederation of Mexican Societies that the Mexican state could not create a new treaty for U.S.-born Mexicans. The official explained that their children were U.S. citizens through birthright and thus entitled to all the rights outlined in the U.S. Constitution as well as subject to its laws. Yet, as children of Mexican nationals, the Mexican

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[1] All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are by the author. Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas to Genero Estrada, Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, January 7, 1931, Expediente, IV-339-12, Acervo Histórico Diplomático de Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, México D.F. (Hereafter SRE).

[2] Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas to Genero Estrada, Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, January 7, 1931, Expediente, IV-339-12, SRE.

Constitution granted them Mexican citizenship. If they found themselves in Mexico, the official assured this migrant group, the state would consider them Mexicans.[3]

The parents of the Confederation of Mexican Societies and their children were not unique or alone in their struggle to determine their relationship to U.S. and Mexican citizenship. In fact, they were part of one of the most significant demographic shifts of the twentieth century in both the United States and Mexico. After the Mexican Revolution and World War I, Mexicans migrated to the United States in unprecedented numbers. They produced the largest cohort of Mexican migrant children of the first half of the twentieth century. The exchange between the SRE and this migrant organization in Los Angeles highlights the precarious position of the first mixed-status families of the early-to-mid twentieth century. Indeed, historical context helps us to further understand their predicament. Despite being U.S. citizens, migrant children were unable to participate fully in U.S. society: they were prohibited from living in white neighborhoods and attended segregated and inferior schools. Moreover, with the passage of the Immigration Act of 1924 Mexicans became increasingly associated with illegality and viewed as unfit for citizenship. While the act did not set numerical quotas for Mexican migrants, it resulted in the creation of the U.S.-border patrol and criminalized unlawful entry.[4]

As the letter from the Confederation of Mexican Societies demonstrates, migrants sought the aid of the Mexican state. Mexican migrant families were formed during a crucial period in Mexican history. As many scholars have noted, the Mexican revolution was followed by an effort

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3 El subsecretario de Relaciones Exteriores to Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas, March 14, 1931, Expediente, IV-339-12, SRE.

4 Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924" *The Journal of American History,* 86, no. 1 (1999); Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004); Kelly Little Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

to create political stability, to foment nationalist sentiment, and to create Mexican citizens.[5] While the nation-building process is generally discussed within the Mexican nation, migrant-state relations reveal its transnational dimension. During the 1920s and 1930s, the number of Mexican consul expanded throughout the United States. Consuls created honorary commissions—migrant organizations under the tutelage of Mexican officials—to foster nationalist sentiment, to create a sense of community, to raise for money for migrant causes, and most importantly, to function as intermediaries between the Mexican state and migrant communities. Lastly, post-revolutionary nationalism provided Mexicans abroad with language to approach and make claims to the state.[6] If migrant children born in the United States were not full members of U.S. society and their parents—Mexican nationals—lived outside the national boundaries of the Mexican state, how did they practice U.S. and Mexican citizenship?

This dissertation uses archival collections in Mexico and the United States to examine the formal practices and strategies that these migrant families used to engage both U.S. and Mexican citizenship and to navigate their place in both nations. In addition, it focuses on informal practices that migrants deployed to practice what Chicano/a scholars term "cultural citizenship:" migrant defined ideas of belonging that transcend the nation-state.[7] This dissertation argues that the

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[5] There is a robust literature on Mexican nation-state formation. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994); Gilbert M. Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov, eds., *Fragments of a Golden Age: The Poltics of Culture in Mexico Since 1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis, eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin: Nation and Cultural Revolution in Mexico, 1920-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

[6] Ann S. Blum, *Domestic Economies: Family, Work, and Welfare in Mexico City, 1884-1943* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); Elena J. Albarrán, *Seen and Heard in Mexico: Children and Revolutionary Cultural Nationalism* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2014); Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

[7] Flores William and Rina Benmayor, eds., *Latino Cultural Citizenship: Claiming Identity, Space, and Rights* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998); Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: NYU Press, 2008). Lisa Lowe's work on Asian American cultural practices makes a similar argument. Lowe argues that Asian American cultural practices "marks alternatives to the national terrain by occupying other spaces, imagining different narratives and critical historiographies." See Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).

practice of citizenship was a multi-sited and transnational historical process. I examine two key areas in which it occurred. First, this dissertation focuses on the efforts of migrant parents and youth to secure educational rights from the Mexican state. From 1924 to 1939 migrant parents, migrant organizations, Mexican consuls, and the Secretary of Public Education established schools for migrant children in the United States. In addition, Mexicans in the United States pushed the Mexican government to create scholarships for U.S.-born youth at two Mexican universities. Second, it focuses on migrant families' use of Mexican and U.S. citizenship during the Great Depression and the use of personal and familial relations to weather the Great Depression. In short, this dissertation shows how Mexicans practiced Mexican citizenship in the United States and U.S. citizenship while in Mexico.

By following migrant families across the U.S.-Mexico border, this dissertation is able to compare the ways in which migrants and U.S.-born youth engaged both the U.S. and Mexican states. Indeed, they used similar language and strategies. For example, Mexicans visited both the U.S. and Mexican consuls. While the consuls did not always provide Mexicans with the resources they needed, they were often important intermediaries between migrants and the state and between migrants and family members in either Mexico and the United States. During the Great Depression, Mexican and U.S. consuls were instrumental in providing repatriates with proof of Mexican and U.S. citizenship, which facilitated their movement in both directions. In addition to visiting consul, Mexicans wrote to government officials, including presidents. Their countless letters, I show, emphasized their citizenship status, their affinity to the U.S. or Mexican nation, and their commitment to contribute to national progress. Moreover, in their letters, Mexicans echoed the nation's patriarchal values and metaphor of the family. Letter writers often referred to

the president as the father of the nation and positioned themselves as children worthy of the state's support.

Historiography

This dissertation bridges and contributes to scholarship on Mexican nation building, Chicano/a historiography and works on Mexican repatriation during the Great Depression. By including migrant families into the process of Mexican nation-building after the Mexican Revolution, I integrate a set of historical actors that have generally been excluded from Mexican historiography. Placing migrants and migrant children within this context contributes to Chicano/a historiography by demonstrating not only that Mexican citizenship mattered for these families, but that it was a negotiated process that included migrants and the Mexican state. Indeed, by framing repatriation around the family and citizenship I argue that migrant families deployed both informal and formal strategies to navigate the Great Depression and cross the U.S.-Mexico border.

Chicano/a scholars have focused a great deal of attention on the first generation of migrant children of the twentieth century. Often referred to as the "Mexican American generation," this cohort came of age in the 1930s and 1940s and occupies central place within Chicano/a historiography. Indeed, they are often viewed as precursors to the Chicano Movement. Scholarship about this generation can be divided into three waves. In the 1980s, scholars argued that this generation sought a place within the United States by fighting for U.S. civil rights. These scholars tend to ignore or downplay transnational connections and emphasize narratives of arrival, settlement, and incorporation.[8] More recent work on this generation has broadened our understand of "Mexican American's" identity and political and cultural practices. For example, some scholars

[8] Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (Yale Press: 1991); George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

situate these migrant children within inter-ethnic relations in an effort to broaden the scholarship on racial, political, or social relations between Mexicans and Anglo-Saxons. In exploring zoot suit culture among African Americans, Mexicans, and poor whites, Luis Alvarez argues that through zoot suit culture, youth resisted an Anglo-Saxon American identity and formed an imagined community outside of World War II American nationalism.[9] Lastly, Chicano/a scholars provide transnational portrait of the "Mexican American generation" by highlighting connections between organizations in the U.S. and Mexico and by arguing that this generation espoused notions of citizenship that challenged those defined by the U.S. state.[10] I build on these work by offering a transnational perspective that is grounded in both the U.S. and Mexico, that interrogates Mexican and U.S. citizenship, and that places children and youth within the family. I demonstrate that U.S.-born youth secured educational rights from the Mexican state, played vital roles for their families in both countries, and attempted to secure rights as U.S. citizens while they resided in Mexico during the Great Depression.

This dissertation also contributes to scholarship on Mexican nation-state formation. Scholars working in this field explore the role of and relationship between the state, intellectuals, culture, citizens, and transnational forces and actors in nation building after the Mexican

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9 Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2008); Anthony Macias, *Mexican American Mojo: Popular Music, Dance, and Urban Culture in Los Angeles, 1935-1968* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

10 Focusing on sports, José M. Alamillo examines the relationship between the Mexican Athletic Association of Southern California (MAASC) and the Confederación Deportiva Mexicana from 1932 to World War II. He argues that "by building transnational ties with the Mexican government and its sport confederation, MAASC was able to offer more athletic opportunities to its members and, in the process, to connect them to an emerging national identity." See José Alamillo, "Playing Across Borders: Transnational Sport and Identities in Southern California and Mexico, 1930-1945" *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 79, 3 (2010); Ramón Saldívar's biography of Américo Paredes, one of the first Chicano scholars, also troubles the U.S. centric narrative of the "Mexican American generation." Saldívar argues that Paredes' work as journalist, poet, and prose writer during the 1930s and 1940s prefigured his academic work and that he espoused a "transcultural Mexican-American social imaginary" that challenged U.S. notions of citizenship. See Ramón Saldívar, *Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).

Revolution.[11] As various scholars demonstrate, nation building was a not a top-down process, but one that was negotiated among a diverse set of actors. While the most important works on nation-state formation have not examined migrant families and youth, there is a growing and important body of scholarship that demonstrates the influence of Mexican nation building on the Mexicans in the United States.[12] My dissertation offers new interpretations of the relationship between Mexican migrants and the Mexican state and the practice of Mexican citizenship in the United States. It shows that the state functioned outside of its national territory and that it responded to and adapted to migrant families' demands. Instead of arguing that consuls were either good or bad, this dissertation argues that consuls and honorary commissions were sites of citizenship.[13] Mexican consuls were important intermediaries who helped Mexicans obtain educational rights for U.S.-born youth and acquire documents to return to Mexico and secure re-entry into the United States. Indeed, a focus on the migrant family de-centers the state and shows that efforts to gain educational rights originated with migrants and youth. Lastly, my reading of migrant letters demonstrates that Mexicans abroad used nationalist discourse and patriarchal language to connect their needs and desires to the Mexican nation.

The economic crisis known as the Great Depression resulted in the voluntary, coerced, and

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[11] See Joseph and Nugent eds., *Everyday Forms of State Formation*; Joseph, Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov eds., *Fragments of a Golden* Age; Mary Kay Vaughan and Stephen E. Lewis eds., *The Eagle and the Virgin*; Important case studies include: Christopher Boyer*, Becoming Campesinos: Politics, Identity, and Agrarian Struggle in Postrevolutionary Mexico* (Stanford University Press, 2003); Alexander S. Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Arizona Press, 2004); Rick Lopez, *Crafting Mexico: Intellectuals, Artisans, and the State After the Revolution (*Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

[12] Julie M. Weise, "Mexican Nationalisms, Southern Racisms: Mexican and Mexican Americans in the U.S. South, 1908-1939," *American Quarterly* Vol. 60, 3, (2008); Gabriela F. Arredondo, *Mexican Chicago: Race, Identity, and Nation, 1916-39* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Sonia Robles, "Shaping *México Lindo*: Radio, music, and gender in Greater Mexico, 1923-1946" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2012).

[13] Scholarship on Mexican consuls is often framed in this manner. Gilbert González argues that consuls were top-down agencies that sought to "control the community's political discourse, culture, and action." See González, *Mexican Consuls and Labor Organizing: Imperial Politics in the American Southwest* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1999); Francisco E. Balderrama, *In Defense of La Raza: The Los Angeles Consulate and the Mexican Community, 1929 to 1936* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1982).

forced repatriation of approximately 400,000 Mexicans.[14] The literature provides a thorough construction of repatriation: it documents the perspectives and actions of U.S. and Mexican officials and reveals the experience of those who were repatriated. While historians working in both the U.S. and Mexico have written about repatriation, they tend to make arguments relevant to either U.S. or Mexican historiography. Book titles such as *Decade of Betrayal* and *Unwanted Mexicans* capture U.S. historians' critical assessment of local as well as national actors and ultimately Mexicans' position in the United States as second class citizens.[15] They also, however, reveal scholars' insistence on using a U.S. civil rights framework to study Mexican repatriation, which often renders migrants as passive victims of U.S. racism. Scholars who study Mexico and historians who work in Mexico, view repatriation from the perspective of the state and Mexican intellectuals. Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso asks whether President Lázaro Cárdenas' administration was innovative in its approach to repatriation, while Casey Walsh is interested in how Mexican intellectuals like Manuel Gamio framed repatriation through the prism of race and

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[14] Scholars disagree about the number of Mexicans that left the United States during the Great Depression. Estimates range from 350,000 to over 1 million. In their 2013 article, Brian Gratton and Emily Merchant argue that only 350,000 returned and that this total included Mexicans who voluntarily returned to Mexico. See "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920-1950," *International Migration Review* Vol. 47, 4 (2013).

[15] There is a robust literature on repatriation. Early and new works that fit this description include: Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1974); Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of betrayal: Mexican repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995); Camille Guérin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994); Linda C. Noel, *Debating American Identity: Southwestern Statehood and Mexican Immigration* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014). For a critical review of scholarship by U.S. scholars and migrant agency see Benny Jr. Andrés, "Invisible Borders: Repatriation and Colonization of Mexican Migrant workers along the California Borderlands during the 1930s" *California History* Vol. 88 (2011). Recent work on repatriation offers new perspectives. Yuki Oda examines immigration laws to show that it became increasingly difficult for U.S. citizens to pass on citizenship to their Mexican-born children. See Yuki Oda, "Family Unity in U.S. Immigration Policy, 1921-1978" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014); Marla Andre Ramírez expands our temporal understanding of repatriation by following the efforts of three families across three generations. See "Contested Illegality: Three Generations of Exclusion through Mexican 'Repatriation' and the Politics of Immigration Law, 1920-2005" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2015).

modernization.[16]

I build on these works by using citizenship and the family to frame my study of repatriation. I focus closer attention to the relationship between migrants, migrant children, and both the U.S. and Mexican state. In doing so, I make three important contributions. First, as Mexican citizens, migrants and migrant children worked with Mexican consuls to acquire both knowledge and documents to return to Mexico and eventually to the United States. Second, I demonstrate that U.S.-born youth visited U.S. consuls and wrote to U.S. presidents to obtain free passage into the United States. While they did not succeed, U.S. consuls helped migrant children acquire proof of their citizenship status and communicate with relatives in the United States. Lastly, I show that families deployed transnational strategies to navigate the Great Depression. Migrant families relied on the advice of relatives and friends in Mexico. Those that returned tended to settled with families. In addition, migrant youth contributed to their family's well-being by securing jobs in both Mexico and the United States. In short, I emphasize formal and informal strategies that migrants used to navigate the Great Depression.

Chapters

Instead of examining the desegregation campaigns common to Chicano/a historiography, Chapter One and Two construct a transnational history of schooling by focusing on the relationship between migrant parents, children, and the Mexican state. Chapter One focuses on the efforts of migrant parents, Mexican consuls, and the SEP to found schools through the United States from 1924 to 1939. Despite the time frame, the founding of schools had multiple origins and was a

16 Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso, *Que se Queden Allá: El gobierno de México y la repatriación de mexicanos en Estados Unidos (1934-1940)* (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte/El Colegio de San Luis, 2007); Casey Walsh, "Eugenic Acculturation: Manuel Gamio, Migration Studies, and the Anthropology of Development in Mexico, 1910-1940," *Latin American Perspectives* 31, No. 5 (2004); Mercedes Carreras de Velasco, *Los Mexicanos Que Devolvio La Crisis: 1929-1932* (Tlatelolco, México: Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores: D.F 1974).

poorly organized project. The Los Angeles consul, the SEP, migrants, and honorary commissions all initiated campaigns to found schools for migrant children. In each case, however, schools represented a collaborative project between migrants and the state. Migrants were responsible for paying the teacher's salary as well as the rent associating with the hall or room that housed a particular school. The SEP, working with the consuls and the SRE, provided schools with textbooks and teaching material. As collaborative projects, these schools represent sites of Mexican citizenship. While schools were founded throughout a fifteen-year period, most schools only lasted one year. Indeed, despite enthusiasm from a range of actors, schools closed down for lack of funds and as a result of opposition from U.S. educational authorities. Their closure represents the limits of both state resources and of practicing Mexican citizenship in the United States.

Chapter Two continues the theme of Mexican citizenship and educational rights by uncovering the history of Mexican "becas" (scholarships) for U.S.-born youth. From 1930 to 1945, honorary commissions, migrant organizations, consular officials, American educators, migrant parents, and children of migrants asked the SRE, Mexican universities and institutions, and Mexican presidents to grant them scholarships. Writing from Arizona, Colorado, California, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, Chicago, and Oklahoma, authors narrated the sacrifices and working class origins of Mexican youth, their characters and values, their nationalist sentiment, and their desire to contribute to the Mexican nation. These carefully constructed letters echoed the post-revolutionary state's discourse on social mobility through education and its goal to foster class-conscious and productive university students. While state agencies rejected individual petitions, the Mexican state created scholarships for U.S-born youth on two separate occasions. In 1939, under the leadership of President Cárdenas, the newly founded Instituto Técnico Industrial de

Tijuana created twenty scholarships for Mexican students based in Southern California. Five years later, during World War II, the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura de Chapingo, in Mexico City, offered an additional five scholarships. In short, Mexicans abroad gained educational rights for U.S.-born youth to attend universities in Mexico.

Chapter Three, Four, and Five provide new interpretations of repatriation by focusing on the relationship between repatriates and Mexican state, the role of the family before, during, and after repatriation, and efforts by U.S.-born youth to claim and benefit from their status U.S. citizens. These chapters demonstrate how repatriates practiced U.S. and Mexican citizenship as well as "cultural citizenship." Chapter Three make two important interventions. First, it uses migrant letters to Mexican consular officials, to the SRE, and Mexican presidents to situate repatriation from migrants' point of view. Their most common request, which the Mexican state was unable to fulfill, was for transportation to the U.S.-Mexico border. In other words, many migrants desired to return to Mexico. Second, this chapter demonstrates that Mexican consuls were intermediaries between migrants and both the U.S. and Mexican state and that they created an entire infrastructure to disseminate information and documents. Rather than a hurried and unplanned return, repatriates worked with consuls to carefully and purposefully accumulate a number of documents. While some of these papers functioned to identify migrants as a Mexican citizens and exempt them from paying imports on their material objects, other documents were clearly intended to help them return to the United States. In short, as Mexican citizens, repatriates worked with the Mexican consul to secure movement both south and north of the U.S.-Mexico border.

By focusing on the family, Chapter Four examines the informal strategies that families deployed to weather the Great Depression. This chapter illustrates that family members helped

repatriates decide whether or not to return to Mexico, provided temporary and semi-permanent housing for those that returned, and, in some cases, employment opportunities and other forms of support. The family and not the U.S. or Mexican state provided the necessary infrastructure to accommodate repatriates. Children and youth born and raised in the United States were central actors during this process, in both Mexico and the United States. Pushing against scholars' interpretation of this cohort as "cultural misfits," Chapter Four argues that migrant children and youth could simultaneously feel distance and affinity towards living and residing in Mexico and that they managed to move between American and Mexican institutions and people. Together, these transnational strategies illustrate how repatriates worked with and relied on family members on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border to weather the Great Depression.

The last chapter of this dissertation focuses on the relationship between repatriates and U.S. citizenship. Instead of assuming that U.S. citizenship held no value for Mexicans during the Great Depression, I explore the actions of repatriates in Mexico and their family members in the United States. From Mexico, U.S.-born youth, migrant parents of U.S. citizens, and U.S. citizens married to Mexican nationals, visited the consul or wrote to U.S. presidents. In the United States, siblings, parents, and grandparents wrote to U.S. officials on behalf of repatriated U.S. citizens and Mexican nationals. From both sides of the border, Mexicans asked the U.S. government to provide them with financial assistance, to facilitate their entrance into the United States, and to help them prove their citizenship status. By emphasizing their financial and familial hardships, affinity to the United States, and citizenship status, repatriates sought to demonstrate to the state that they were worthy of its resources. Despite their heartfelt narratives, the Secretary of State denied migrants' requests for financial assistance. While migrants did not receive the financial support they desired, the U.S.

government did help facilitate the movement of birth certificates and financial resources from relatives in the United States to repatriates in Mexico.

Sources

In order to write a history of the first Mexican migrant families of the twentieth century and follow families across the U.S.-Mexico border, I conducted research in Mexico, California, and in Washington D.C. Below, I provide a summary of the major archival collections and sources used in this dissertation. Instead of narrating these by chapter, I organize them around three categories: sources that contribute to our understanding of the formal practice of Mexican citizenship, U.S. citizenship, and primary documents that shed light on migrant and repatriates' informal practices that constitute "cultural citizenship."[17]

I use sources at the Secretary of Public Education (SEP), the National Archives, and the Secretary of Foreign Relations (SRE), to understand migrant-state relations and the practice of Mexican citizenship. I use these archives to construct a history of the founding of Mexican schools, the creation of scholarships at Mexican universities, and repatriation. Inventories and correspondence between consuls and the SRE reveal the types and number of documents that consuls issued to repatriates. These include "matriculas," certificates of residency, and letters of introduction. Instead of tabulating all the documents found at the SRE, I take a small sample from primary sources related to 1931 to lay out the types of papers migrants acquired. In the future, I plan to incorporate and analyze more sources. In addition, sources related to schools, scholarships, and repatriation reveal much about migrant-state dynamics. Consuls and honorary commissions, I argue, were sites of citizenship. Moreover, Mexican consuls were intermediaries between migrant

[17] Chicano/a scholars use "cultural citizenship" to refer to migrant defined ideas of rights and belongings, which are often more inclusive and transcend the nation-state. See William and Benmayor, eds., *Latino Cultural Citizenship;* Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries*

communities and the Mexican state. Lastly, these archives contain countless letters written by migrant parents and U.S.-born youth. Together, these letters reveal Mexican migrants' desires and needs as well as the language they used to petition the state for resources.

Collections at the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA) in Washington D.C. mirrors documents found at the SRE. NARA houses reports by consuls in Mexico, written communication between U.S. consuls and the State Department, and letters from Mexicans to government officials and U.S. presidents. I use these sources to examine repatriates' attempt to secure free passage from the U.S. government to the United States, the limits and possibilities of practicing U.S. citizenship, and the relationship between U.S. consuls and Mexican communities on both sides of the border. These sources are important for another reason: they demonstrate that Mexicans deployed a similar set of strategies to engage both the U.S. and Mexican state. Mexicans visited consuls, wrote to representatives, and used patriarchal language to make claims to citizenship.

To construct the experiences and informal practices of Mexican migrant families during the Great Depression, I use oral histories conducted in the 1970s with repatriated families, the ethnographic notes of anthropologists and sociologists, accounts found in newspapers and magazines, and the transnational and personal letters of the Venegas family. These primary sources from California Stata University, Fullerton, the Bancroft Library at Berkeley, and collections at University of Southern California, University of California, Los Angeles, and Loyola Marymount demonstrate the ways in which families experienced repatriation and deployed kin networks to stay in the U.S. and to return to Mexico. In short, they provide historians with view of migrants' informal practices. They also provide a larger narrative from which we can make sense of their interaction with both the Mexican and U.S. state

Part One

Migrant Parents, Migrant Children, and the Mexican State

A number of personal and structural factors negatively impacted the educational attainment of Mexican students during the first half of the twentieth century. As with other ethnic minorities, school segregation was the most significant institutional obstacle. Mexicans were legally considered white, which meant that educators lacked any legal rationale for segregating Mexican school children as was the case with African Americans. Educators across the nation used language to justify placing Mexican children in separate primary schools. Studying California in 1931, Ward William Leis found that eighty-five percent of California's school districts segregated Mexican students.[1] Educators and school administrators argued that separating Spanish-speaking children served to foster future integration. After learning English in primary schools, students would be prepared to study and learn alongside their white classmates. In practice, historians and contemporary observers have demonstrated that this resulted in an inferior education. Mexicans inhabited run down school buildings and classrooms and were often taught by teachers with very little training. "There exist practically no pre-service training schools or courses for teachers who are to become educators of the Mexican children" wrote the American educator Katherine Hollier Meguire.[2] Reflecting on this problem for her 1938 thesis at the University of Southern California, Meguire noted that teachers had "no knowledge of the Mexican race, of its characteristics, or of its ideals…." Educators, she continued, were forced to "grope blindly for an understanding of these

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[1] Ward William Leis, "The Status of Education for Mexican Children in Four Border States" (Master's thesis, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1931), cited in Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. and Richard R. Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Hopwood: The Educational Plight and Struggle of Mexican Americans in the Southwest" *Harvard Educational Review* Vol. 68 (1998).

[2] Katherine Hollier Meguire, "Educating the Mexican Child in the Elementary School" (Master's thesis, University of Southern California, Los Angeles 1938). Reprinted (San Francisco, Saratoga, California: R and E Research Associates, 1973), 2.

people and of the problems to be met in their education."[3] The study, "The Education of Spanish-Speaking Children in Five Southwestern States," conducted during this time period and commissioned by the Office of Education of the U.S. Department of the Interior, found the logic used to segregate Mexican children wanting: "So few Mexican pupils reach the upper elementary grades that the opinion has not to date received much of a test."[4]

The educational experiences of migrant children reflected their status as second-class citizens. While the Immigration Act of 1924 did not set numerical quotas for Mexican migration, its emphasis on deportation, along with the founding of the U.S.-Border Patrol, "hardened racial categories" and produced what Mae Ngai terms "alien citizens": subjects who American society viewed "as permanently foreign and unassimilable to the nation."[5] Chicano/a scholars focus on Mexicans' efforts to desegregate schools, educators fight to change the "educational pipeline", the long history of bilingual education, and the rise of ethnic studies programs in colleges and universities.[6] Despite the fact that the landmark case *Mendez v. Westminster* (1946, 47) broke the "separate but equal" ruling established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, segregation continues to be a prominent feature of U.S. public schools.[7]

The following two chapters add to this rich scholarship by placing migrant children within a transnational context.[8] Chapter One constructs a history of the "Mexican schools" from 1924 to

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3 Meguire, "Educating the Mexican Child," 1.
4 Cited in San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo."
5 Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (New Jersey: Princeton, 2004),
6 Roberto Alvarez, "The Lemon Grove Incident: The Nation's First Successful Desegregation Court Case," *Journal of San Diego* History, 32 (1986); Mario T. García, *Blowout! Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Carlos Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1936-1981* (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2007); José M. Aguilar, "¡Si Se Pudo!: A Critical Race History of Movements for Chicana and Chicano Studies at UCLA, 1990-1993" (PhD diss. UCLA, 2013).
7 For a long overview of segregation see Richard R. Valencia, "Segregation, Desegregation, and Integration of Chicano Students," in *Chicano School Failure and Success: Past, Present, and Future,* ed. Richard R. Valencia, Third edition, (New York and London: Routledge, 2011).
8 Some important works that place education in a transnational context include Ruben Flores, *Backroads Pragmatists: Mexico's Melting Pot and Civil Rights in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

1939, while Chapter Two examines the establishment of scholarships for U.S.-born children in 1939 and 1944. By engaging the country of origin from abroad, migrant families and U.S.-born youth practiced Mexican citizenship in the United States: a form of transnational citizenship.[9]

Press, 2014); Gilbert González, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico and Mexican Immigrants, 1880-1950* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2004); Rachel Newman, *Los niños migrantes: entre Michoacán y California: Pertenencia, estado-nación, y educación 1976-1987* (Jalisco: El Colegio de Jalisco, 2014).

[9] In their early and pioneering study, Linda Basch, Nina G. Schiller, and Cristina Szanton Blanc defined transnationalism as a "process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement." See Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1994). In the mid 1990s, the United States and Mexico allowed migrants to obtain dual citizenship. Using this as departure, political scientist and sociologist have explored a range of migrant practices in and between the U.S. and Mexico and theorized migrant-state relationships, the nation, and citizenship. See Michael Peter Smith and Matt Bakker, *Citizenship across Borders: The Political Transnationalism of El Migrante* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); David Fitzgerald, *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). While "transnational citizenship" is most closely associated with this body of literature, historians have begun to explore state-migrant relations during the first half of the twentieth century, often using insights from scholarship on Mexican nation-state formation. See Deborah Cohen, *Braceros: Migrant Citizens and Transnational Subjects in Postwar United States and Mexico* (Chapell Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Julie Weise, *Corazón de Dixie: Mexicanos in the U.S. South since 1910* (Chapell Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

Chapter One

'Orphans of the Nation': Schools for Migrant Children

From 1924 to 1939, Mexican migrant parents and the Mexican state worked to create and support at least thirty schools for migrant children throughout the Southwestern United States. The curriculum varied, but educators taught in Spanish and covered Mexican history, geography, and reading and writing. Some teachers emerged from the local migrant population, while others arrived directly from Mexico. Most, if not all, schools benefitted from the aid of the Mexican state. Mexico's Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretary of Public Education, hereafter SEP) mailed hundreds of books and educational literature and charged two educators with directing the founding and running of Mexican migrant schools in Southern California. Throughout this process, the Mexican consuls served as intermediaries between migrants in the United States and the Mexican state. Despite the enthusiasm and labor of Mexican consuls, the SEP, and migrant parents, individual schools for U.S.-born Mexicans tended closed their doors after a very short duration, often just one year. Using primary sources from the SEP, the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Secretary of Foreign Relations, hereafter SRE), the Bancroft Library, and Spanish language newspapers from the United States, this chapter constructs a history of the founding and closure of Mexican schools.

This migrant-state effort to found schools coincided with the rise of migrant families and the Mexican state's increased presence in the United States. The Mexican Revolution and World War I stimulated Mexican migration to the United States. While migrant parents retained Mexican citizenship and did not seek U.S. citizenship through naturalization, their children were granted U.S. citizenship through birthright. However, as second class citizens, migrant children were unable to participate fully in U.S society. Migrant children were segregated in public schools until

the passage of *Mendez v Westminster* in 1946. It was during this period of exclusion and tenuous belonging that the Mexican state increased its presences in the United States by creating new consular offices and stimulating the formation of honorary commissions, migrant-led organizations. This educational project required migrant labor, state resources, and a shared ideology. Instead of "a middle-class, Mexico City-focused perspective on the largely working-class immigrant population," as George Sánchez argues, the founding of schools was a negotiated process among a set of transnational actors.[1] These schools represent sites of transnational citizenship and Mexican nation-state formation. Despite the limited long term success of each school, migrant parents successfully secured educational resources for their children. Moreover, the schools provided the state a means to maintain contact with and foster nationalism among Mexicans abroad.

By framing a topic generally explored by Chicano/a historians within the historiography of modern Mexico, this chapter contributes to scholarship on education and our understanding of state-migrant relations, namely transnational citizenship. Chicano/a scholars tend to focus on migrant children's experiences in America's educational system and efforts to desegregate schools, providing only a cursory examination of Mexican schools. While historians of Mexican education are becoming more transnational, Mexican migrant families have not entered into their narratives.[2] In examining the Mexican state and migrants' investment in the education of U.S.-

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1 See George Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 123. Gilbert González arrives at similar conclusion. González, *Mexican Consuls and Labor Organizing: Imperial Politics in the American Southwest* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1999).

2 In a recent essay, Eugenia Roldán Vera urged scholars to explore the "supranational dimension" of Mexico's educational system. See "Para 'desnacionalizar' la historia de la educación: reflexiones en torno a la diffusion mundial de la escuela lancasteriana en el primer tercio del siglo XIX," *Revista Mexicana de Historia de la Educación* Vol. 1, 2, (2013). Ruben Flores's recent book examines the movement of American and Mexican intellectuals in the post-revolutionary period. See *Backroads Pragmatists: Mexico's Melting Pot and Civil Rights in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

born youth, this chapter offer a transnational history of citizenship and the "Mexican American generation."[3]

The founding of schools was not a uniform process and did not follow a linear trajectory. Sometimes, the state orchestrated the opening of a new school, while other times migrants and honorary commissions led the effort. Moreover, individual schools opened and closed throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Thus, this chapter is organized thematically instead of chronologically. Divided into three sections, the first one examines schools founded under the leadership and initiative of Mexican officials and honorary commissions, while the second highlights cases in which migrant individuals were the main protagonists. Regardless of who founded a particular school, these educational projects were collaborative efforts that brought together a range of state and non-state actors. The third section narrates U.S. resistance to and closure of Mexican schools and the Mexican state and consular officials' response. While schools were founded throughout the United States, I draw heavily on examples from Southern California and Texas.

The Mexican State

For our purposes the Mexican state constitutes Mexican consuls, the SEP, and the SRE. All of these government departments played an important, if uneven role in the founding of Mexican schools. Mexican consuls spearheaded the efforts to found schools and functioned as a intermediary between migrants and the state. They wrote to and petitioned the SEP on behalf of Mexican migrants and migrant organizations and corresponded with both the SRE and the SEP during conflicts with U.S. officials. The SEP mailed books, magazines, maps, the Mexican flag,

[3] David Fitzgerald, *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2009); Kelly Little Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010); Julie Weise, *Corazón de Dixie: Mexicanos in the U.S. South since 1910* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Julia G. Young, "Cristero Diaspora: Mexican Immigrants, The U.S. Catholic Church, and Mexico's Cristero War, 1926-29," *The Catholic Historical Review* Vol. 98, No. 2, (April 2012).

photographs of presidents, and other educational resources. During its most pro-active period—1926 to 1930—it placed two educators in charge of directing the founding and running of Mexican schools in Southern California. This four-year time period sheds light on the state's plans, ideas, and hopes for the children of Mexican migrants. It also demonstrates the state's reliance on migrants' intellectual and material investment and support. Below, I narrate this four-year time period.

Margarita Robles, a teacher in the SEP's Departamento de Enseñaza Primaria y Normal (Department of Primary and Normal Education), arrived to Los Angeles in 1926 and stayed until 1928. In May, she worked with the Los Angeles consul to found the "La escuela México," the first of many schools to be found in Los Angeles during this time period.[4] In its second year, like most of the Mexican schools, it operated from four to six pm and instructed children between the ages of six and twelve. The most noticeable aspect of Robles' time in Los Angeles was the articulation of a transnational vision for Mexican migrant children. According to *La Opinion*, students who returned to Mexico would be able "continue their studies in Mexican schools." Robles' status as a Mexican educator, according the Spanish language newspaper, gave validity to exams taken in the United States."[5] Moreover, in 1928 she proposed "repatriación dignificada" (dignified repatriation) to her superiors at the SEP. After finishing their education in the United States, migrant children would move to Mexico and become rural school teachers. In this capacity, they would help "Indians" become literate. Robles reasoned that if U.S.-born Mexicans stayed in the United States they would never receive the same compensation as their white counterparts. Her second, much more modest proposition, was for students in Mexico to write to their "small

[4] "Gran Disputa en Belvedere: La Escuela 'México' en Peligro de Desaparecer," *La Opinion*, July 31, 1927.
[5] "La Escuela Mexico' de Belvedere, Un informe de la fundación y funcionamiento de este importante plantel educativo," *La Opinion,* February 17, 1927.

compatriots" in California in order to "establish a constant exchange of ideas, beneficial to national ties."[6]

There is no evidence to indicate that her plan to incorporate Mexican students as rural school teachers came to fruition. In fact, while the number of schools expanded during her tenure, they were poorly funded and were generally housed in very modest buildings. During his visit to Los Angeles, Salvador Mendoza, a representative of SEP, characterized the schools as "insufficient and rickety, though well intentioned." Both Mendoza and Los Angeles Consul F. Alfonso Pesqueira wanted more. Mendoza hoped to combine the energy and effort behind the number of schools throughout Southern California to create a "school that left nothing to be desired."[7] The Los Angeles Consul F. Alfonso Pesqueira recognized the project's shortcomings and announced his vision for Mexican schools during a meeting with the "Confederación de sociedades mexicanas" (Confederation of Mexican Societies). He informed migrants that he planned to travel to Mexico City and finalize the details of a plan to found fifty schools for Mexican children. Pesqueira wanted the consul to secure and operate fifty buildings throughout Southern California. Eventually, he reasoned, the state would place migrant parents in charge of all the administrative duties. The schools' would obtain books from the SEP and its curriculum would include Spanish and Mexican history.[8] Lastly, migrant parents would contribute one dollar per month.

Instead of creating one large school or renting or purchasing space for fifty separate schools, the SEP appointed Carmen Ramos as "inspector of Mexican schools" and housed this

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[6] It is plausible, but doubtful that the SEP implemented a repatriation plan to train Mexicans raised and educated in the United States as rural teachers. See "Repatriacion de Mexicanos de California," *La Opinion*, January 24, 1928.
[7] "Una Escuela Modelo y un Ateneo," *La Opinion,* May 10, 1928.
[8] "50 Colegios Mexicanos en California del Sur: Una Iniciativa Aprobada por la Secretaría de Educación," *La Opinion,* November 12, 1927.

position at the Los Angeles consulate. Ramos replaced Robles and worked in Los Angeles from 1928 to 1930. As a forty-five-year old educator, she arrived with more than twenty years of teaching experience. Ramos received her title as professor of primary instruction at the Normal School in 1901. After a few years of working as an aid, she became the director of the Escuela de Párvulos in Mexico in 1906. Ramos worked as a director of several schools and proved to be both innovative and energetic.[9] In addition to founding an experimental school associated with the National University, she initiated the "Hora del cuento" (Story Hour) in libraries as well as on the radio. After listening to a story, audience members were invited to narrate stories they learned in their home or at school. In the newspaper article "La reforma educacional en México," Gabriela Mistral associated the "Hora del cuento" with popular and collective practices of Mexico: "this comes from the way of creating that is natural among the population that produces popular music without technique and decoration, without formal training at Bellas Artes."[10] Like many Mexican educators, Ramos took courses with John Dewey, the important and influential American educator. In a 1912 letter, Ramos articulated aspects of her pedagogy and thus illustrated Dewey's impact on Mexican educators. In defending her motive for organizing a party, she insisted that the role of education was to prepare students for a "complete life," which included their intellectual, physical, moral, and aesthetic development. "The teacher, and especially the kindergarten teacher," Ramos wrote, "has to present nature to children through impressions to activate and foster sentiments, kill

[9] Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente R 2/6, Archivo Histórico de la Secretaría de Educación Pública, Archivo General de la Nación, México, D.F. (Hereafter, SEP, AGN).

[10] Gabriela Mistral, "La Reforma Educacional en Mexico," *El Mercurio* (Chile) cited in *Boletin Secretaría de Educación Pública,* 1926. Tomo V. No. 7. Pg 47 to 63, SEP, AGN.

bad passions, create good habits, construct characters, and, in one word, form complete beings that will be of service to themselves, to their homes, to their nation, and to humanity."[11]

In her capacity as a SEP educator, Ramos provided Los Angeles school teachers with pedagogical guidance. Every last Friday of the month, she held conferences for them at the Los Angeles consulate.[12] On Wednesdays, Ramos delivered lectures to Mexican adults at the Women's Association in Boyle Heights, a neighborhood in East Los Angeles. In addition, she published a bi-weekly magazine titled *El Faro*. Directed at Mexican children and migrant workers, it was intended to function as an extension of the Mexican schools.[13] It was likely modeled on the magazine *Coopera*, which was produced by the SEP and distributed free of charge to schools in Mexico. Published from 1925 to 1928, the Mexican magazine included comic strips and children's drawings and instructed its readers on proper hygiene. Through reader contests the magazine worked to create an active and engaged readership and audience.[14] During this "Mexicanization" labor, Ramos also took note of the American educational system. In the summer of 1929, she visited schools and observed courses for Mexican and American children related to industry and commerce. She informed one of her superiors, Mr. Pichardo, that the SEP could adopt these courses.[15]

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11 Carmen Ramos to Secretaría de Educación Pública, Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente: R 2/6, SEP, AGN.
12 Carmen Ramos to Secretaría de Educación Pública, Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente: R 2/6, SEP, AGN.
13 Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente: R 2/6, SEP, AGN; Rodolfo Uranga, "Glosario del Dia," *La Opinion*, October 30, 1929.
14 Sarah Berkin Corona and Uriel Arnulfo, *Para La Infancia: Ediciones de la SEP: 1921 to 1993* (Secretaría de Educación Pública, Subsecretaría de Educación Básica, Dirección General de Materiales Educativos: 1995).
15 Carmen Ramos to Señor Pichardo, August 26, 1928, Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente R 2/6, SEP, AGN.

Ramos was also tasked with expanded the number of schools in Southern California.[16] During her two years in the United States she established a total of nine schools, some of which were for adults. As early as September 1929, at least seven schools for children operated throughout the Los Angeles area. Some of these were likely founded and run under Ramos' guidance, while others were created by migrant individuals and organizations. While it is difficult to know who founded which schools, we know they existed throughout Southern California. Mexican schools could be found in the Mexican barrio of Hicks camp in El Monte, in Pacoima, in Watts, in Van Nuys Heights, in Irwindale, and in Claremont. An additional two schools were in the process of being founded, one in Bakersfield, in Northern California and another in San Bernardino, east of East Los Angeles.[17]

As employees of the SEP, Margarita Robles and Carmen Ramos represented the Mexican government's investment in the education of Mexicans abroad. In the fourteen-year span that the SEP supported migrant schools, this was the only time that it placed educators in the United States. Indeed, it signaled the SEP's largest financial contribution. After Robles and Ramos's tenure in Los Angeles, the SEP supported the founding and running of schools by providing educational material. However, even during this crucial four-year time period, the SEP depended on migrants' labor and financial contributions. For example, the founding of "La escuela México" in 1926 brought together a number individuals and organizations from Belvedere, one of Los Angeles' most populated Mexican enclaves. Zeferino Ramírez, a migrant entrepreneur and father of five, donated vacant land and constructed the building that housed the school.[18] Supporters of the school

[16] Secretaría de Educación Pública to Jefe del Departamento de Enseñanza Primaria y Normal, March 2, 1928; Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente: R 2/6, SEP, AGN.
[17] "Ocho Escuelas mexicanas en Los Angeles" *La Opinion* September 1, 1929.
[18] "La Escuela "Mexico' de Belvedere, Un Informe de la Fundación y Funcionamiento de este Importante Plantel Educativo," *La Opinion* February 17 1927.

also raised money by tapping into one of the Mexican communities most important physical and cultural spaces. During this time period, theaters in Los Angeles screened Mexican films and staged performances by Mexican entertainers from Greater Mexico.[19] Alma Iturbide, a young girl from the neighborhood collected funds at the Teatro Estela. Eugenia Torres donated the proceeds from her performance at the Teatro Bonito. Local businessmen and migrant organizations contributed an additional one hundred dollars to the growing pool of money. The migrant cultural group "El pensador mexicano," the school's major benefactor, "provided the necessary funds, for many months, to sustain the school."[20]

Manuel Gamio's ethnographic research on Mexican migration provides us with a portrait of this migrant organization's president Santiago Rivera and two of its members, Ignacio Sandoval and Zeferino Ramírez. These migrants' intellectual, emotional, and financial contributions to "La escuela México" reflected their affinity for Mexico and their commitment to living in the United States. These three Mexicans migrated to the United States in the early 1900s and eventually settled in Los Angeles. During their interviews with Gamio's researchers, they spoke at length about their affinity and attachment to Mexico and about living in the United States.[21] Santiago, for example, noted that he consumed Mexican food, attended Mexican theaters, celebrated Mexican Independence, and participated in various migrant associations. For Santiago, it was "as though he was in Mexico." Yet, as Mexicans living outside of the national territory, they worried about losing their connection to Mexico. This was heightened by the fact that both Rivera and Ramírez were

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[19] Nicólas Kanellos, *Hispanic Theatre in the United States* (Houston: Arte Público Press, 1984).
[20] "Gran Disputa en Belvedere: La Escuela 'México' en Peligro de Desaparecer," *La Opinion,* July 31, 1927.
[21] With funding from the Social Science Research Council, Manuel Gamio and his research team traveled throughout the United States. This was one of the first studies on Mexican migration. For more about his work and those of his contemporaries see Patricia Arias and Jorge Durand, "Visiones and Versiones Pionera de la migracion Mexicana. Manuel Gamio, Robert Redfield, and Paul S. Taylor" *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 61. No. 2 (2011). For a critical reflection on Gamio's ethnography see José Limón, *American Encounters: Greater Mexico, the United States, and the Erotics of Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998).

committed to staying in the United States. Their families were used to living in the United States and they did not have faith in Mexico's economy or its politicians. In fact, on a trip he took to Mexico, Ramírez observed that things were "backward and very disorganized."[22] The desire to remain connected to Mexico, while living in the United States, produced a tension, one which was expressed through U.S. citizenship and the education of their children. Ignacio Sandoval, for example, was encouraged to obtain U.S. citizenship in order to gain acceptance into a union and thus receive better pay. Ignacio told Gamio's researcher that he would rather have his two eyes taken out than change his citizenship.[23] If ever obligated to change his nationality, Zeferino Ramírez would "take his coaches and his small valuables and his children. Even if it was walking, and if it hangs between losing all the product of his labor, which is now quite a lot, and losing his nationality, he would prefer to go naked but always a Mexican."[24] While they could not change their children's status as U.S. citizens, they could foster nationalist sentiment. Santiago taught his children to love Mexico and take pride in being Mexican. He wanted all the 'sons of Mexico" who resided in the United States to learn Spanish. In short, the founding of a Mexican schools represented migrants' attachment to Mexico and their commitment to staying in the United States.

Honorary Commissions

The majority of schools were founded by honorary commissions, which were state-created, but migrant led organizations. Beginning in the 1920s, the state sought to increase the number of consuls in the United States as well as honorary commissions. To accomplish this goal, the state and consuls hosted conferences with migrants. While the state prohibited honorary commissions

[22] Zeferino Ramírez, month and day not specified, 1927, Reel Two, Notes gathered for his book, Mexican immigration to the United States and related material, 1926-1928 Mexican immigrant, his life story, the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (Hereafter, Bancroft).
[23] In numerous interviews conducted by Gamio and his researchers, migrants associated naturalization with bodily harm. Bancroft.
[24] Zeferino Ramírez, month and day not specified, 1927, Reel Two, Bancroft.

from engaging in politics, participation in these organizations provided migrants with access to and resources from the Mexican consuls and the Mexican state. For example, the 1922 "Convencion de comisiones honorificas y brigadas de la cruz azul mexicana" included the participation of Aarón Sáenz of the SRE and Consul General Enrique D. Ruiz. In a conference held approximately fifteen months after the 1922 convention, Alejandro Lubbert assured the 136 representatives from these two organizations that the Mexican consul at San Antonio and Mexican government would lend all the moral support necessary for the progress and development of their activities and programs. For the consul, the goal of the conference was to understand the needs of these associations, to hear their suggestions, and to help protect "all good Mexicans" in foreign lands. For the state, honorary commissions provided a vital link to Mexican migrant communities and a vehicle to further the state's goals, particularly fostering nationalist sentiment. Speaking as a representative of the state, Lubbert encouraged migrant leaders to engage in "pro-patria labor" and to establish "union and brotherhood" among all Mexicans.

By the end of July 1931, 100 honorary commissions existed throughout the United States.[25] Honorary commissions were important intermediaries between migrants and the Mexican consul and relied on both the Mexican state and Mexican community in order to open and operate schools for migrant children. Through community events and monthly fees, honorary commissions tried to secure financial resources from migrant parents to cover the cost of operating a school, which often included a teachers' salary and rent. For educational resources, such as books, the honorary commissions visited or wrote to Mexican consuls, who then petitioned the SEP.

Atilaño Saldaña's labor in the Mexican community of Karnes City, Texas from 1925 to 1930 provides an illustrative example. In 1924, one year after attending the conference in San

[25] Memoria de la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Agosto de 1930 a Julio de 1931, SRE.

Antonio, Saldaña opened a school in Karnes City.[26] Acting as both the president of the honorary commission and the school's teacher, Saldaña asked the state for a photograph of President Obregon for his classroom.[27] This school likely folded since he opened up the "Escuela mexicana en español" (The Mexican school in Spanish) in November 1928. This new school received support from the larger Mexican community and the Mexican consul. The "Sociedad hijos de México" (Society of Mexico's Sons) provided a space free of charge, while parents and Consul General Enrique Santibáñez provided material support. The two parties that Saldaña organized in summer of 1929 provide a nice example of everyone's investment and support for this school. On the night of August 5, the school hosted an end of the year party at the salon of the migrant organization "Benevolencia mexicana" (Mexican Benevolence).[28] The Spanish language newspaper listed the schedule of events and invited the entire Mexican colony. Throughout the evening, boys and girls sang a number of songs and recited poems, such as "el pobre debe instruirese" (the poor should get an education), "la huerfana" (the orphan), "mi bandera" (my flag) "sére grande un dia" (I will be great one day), and "a mi patria" (for my nation). Saldaña likely used these songs to entertainment and foster nationalist sentiment among migrant children. In their speeches, Consul General Enrique Santibáñez and Atilaño Saldaña likely used the children's performances to emphasize the importance of educating migrant children.[29] Most importantly, the evening provided an opportunity for these various actors to renew their support for the Mexican school. Saldaña and some of the parents assured the consul general that the school would open the

[26] Report and program included in Expediente 38-12-89, Acervo Histórico Diplomático de Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, México D.F. (Hereafter, SRE).
[27] Atilaño Saldaña to Alvaro Obregon, May 1, 1924, Ramo Presidentes, Obregon Calles, Expediente 241-E-K-1, Archivo General de la Nación, México, D.F.
[28] Newspaper clipping was forwarded along with a request for material. Consul general to SEP, June 10, 1929, Expediente IV-264-56, SRE.
[29] Clipping from August 3, 1929 was included in note from consul general to Subsecretary of SRE, Expediente IV-264-56, SRE

following year and the consul general promised to support their efforts. Consul General Enrique Santibáñez kept his promise by requesting books from SEP.[30]

Individual Migrants

Juana Ornelas and J. Refugio Ramírez were not part of an honorary commission or migrant organization. In fact, they resided in neighborhoods far from Mexican consuls and established Mexican communities. Yet, they worked hard to create Mexican schools and, like honorary commissions throughout the United States, received support from the Mexican government and migrant parents.

Approximately one hundred and forty miles from San Antonio, Texas, Eagle Pass lies along the U.S.-Mexico border. In 1930, its total population was just slightly above 5,000 inhabitants.[31] A small city dedicated to agriculture and mining, the Mexican community was unstable and migratory. In 1924, an eighteen-year-old Juana Ornelas left her family's home in Piedras Negras, Coahuila and headed to Eagle Pass. As a resident of the border, she arrived with a clear a set of beliefs about migrant children and the role of education in society. Children of working-class parents, according to Ornelas, were at a grave disadvantage. Working-class parents, she claimed, did not understand the importance of obtaining an education. They also failed to consider that an uneducated population negatively impacted society and the nation. Moreover, she worried that like "abandoned children" these "children of Mexico" would lose their "love for their

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[30] Consul general to SEP, September 1929 and consul general to Subsecretary of SRE, August 5, 1929, Expediente IV-264-56, SRE. After the first party, Consul General Enrique Santibáñez wrote to the SRE. He praised Saldañas labor and requested material on behalf of the school. By mid July, the Secretaria de Agricultura y Fomento mailed twenty-five maps of the Mexican republic. See Consul General Enrique Santibáñez to Sub-Secretary of SRE, April 9, 1929 and Secretaria de Agricultura y Fomento to Subsecretario Encargado del despacho de SRE, July 15, 1929, Expediente IV-264-56, SRE.

[31] Texas State Historical Association, accessed September 10, 2014 https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html ; Ben E. Pingenot, *Historical Highlights of Eagle Pass and Maverick County* (Eagle Pass, Texas: Eagle Pass Chamber of Commerce, 1971); Ben E. Pingenot, ed., *Paso del Águila...Memoirs of Jesse Sumpter* (Austin: Encino, 1969).

homeland." Education, for Ornelas, was not a privilege, but a right, one that should extend to children, especially those who found themselves in foreign lands. Schools and educators, for this young teacher, were positioned to play an integral role in society. They could, she reasoned, help prepare children to live honorably, provide students with the intellectual capacity to overcome life's challenges, and train them to meet their social obligations.

In 1924, Ornelas focused all her energies and available resources to found the "Escuela mexicana." She reached out to the director of the American school, who loaned her twelve student desks and one chalkboard. In the director's opinion and experience, it was important for Mexican children to learn Spanish before entering American schools. We know, however, that this was a common excuse used by school officials through the United States to justify segregating Mexican children. In this case, Ornelas' motives fit with this racist logic. It also provided her with key material resources. To advertise her school, Ornelas circulated flyers among the Mexican community. In her role as teacher, the flyer assured parents, she would be very vigilant, practice strict discipline, and mold the students into "good men, friends of the truth, active and energetic, men conscious of their obligations" and ultimately "make them useful to society and their family."[32] Because she used the curriculum found in Mexico's schools, parents had "no reason to envy the education that Mexican children received."[33] Like schools founded by consular officials and honorary commissions, Ornelas relied on migrant parents' monthly contributions for her salary and the school's expenses. Students in kindergarten and first grade were charged one dollar per month, while second and third graders were expected to pay one dollar and twenty-five cents.[34]

[32] See flyer in Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.
[33] See flyer in Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.
[34] See flyer in Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.

Thirty Mexican children attended Ornelas' school, but their migrant parents were not able to provide enough financial support to keep the school open. Just a few miles from her parents' home, this young teacher decided to move back to Mexico when her school failed. The Ornelas family lived comfortably and were likely part of the middle class. In a letter to the consulate, she recalled playing her piano, writing on her typewriter, and reading many books. Back in Mexico, she found employment at a public school, but never forgot about the migrant families in the "little town" across the border. Indeed, she compared her students in Piedras Negras to those in Eagle Pass. She described the ones in the United States as "little savages that do not know how to speak, express themselves, or even appear to be Mexican."[35]

In 1928, in the face of her parents' misgivings, she returned to the United States and joined the "little savages" that "needed her." Now, as an experienced teacher, Ornelas returned to the United States. She brought two important things with her: her two sisters and savings that she acquired while working in Mexico. The "Escuela modelo mexicana" (Model Mexican School), was located in San Lusito, one of the poorest and most remote neighborhoods of Eagle Pass. The school itself was housed in a very humble building. One room was unable to retain warmth during the winters or shield its inhabitants during Texas' unforgiving summers. As in 1924, she approached the director of the American school (now Mr. Miller) who gladly loaned her twenty-one student desks, two chalkboards, and a chair and a table.[36] In September of 1928, she used the same language from her previous flyer to create a new one. Her new school now included a night class as well courses on grammar and arithmetic. The most important difference, which reflected Ornelas' experience with the Mexican residents of Eagle Pass, was the price and hours of instruction. She lowered the cost of enrollment to fifty cents for students in kindergarten and first

[35] Letter from Juana Ornelas to unspecified consul, August, 14, 1929, Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.
[36] Letter from Juana Ornelas to unspecified consul, August, 14, 1929, Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.

grade and seventy-five cents for second and third grade students. This price, however, was still too much for migrant families. In October, she issued a second flyer, which advertised a new price and two new courses: the rate was lowered for all grades to twenty-five cents and she added a piano class and an evening Spanish class for the "bigger children."

As a Mexican educator working in the United States, Ornelas sought to "erase Americanism from [the] mind" of forty students and to teach them about Mexico, the "beloved motherland."[37] In a letter to the consulate, she boasted about her students' progress. Ornelas recalled that when she first started working with migrant students, they laughed at the flag, refused to salute it, and clearly "did not understanding anything." Parents, she informed the consul, told her that their children preferred the American flag. Through her efforts, however, the students came to love, respect, and sing to the flag on national holidays. This nationalist labor mirrored her emphasis on order and discipline. They progressed from "screaming and making disorder" to listening, asking questions when they did not understand the lesson, and even teaching each other. Ornelas informed the consul that parents were surprised with how well their children performed on their exams.[38] While there is likely a degree of hyperbole in Ornelas' statements, it is clear that students did learn. Esperanza Callega, a representative of the consulate, visited the school and noted in an official report that the students knew how to read and write in Spanish and could identify a few places in Mexico.[39]

To further the mission of the "Escuela modelo mexicana" and raise funds, Juana Ornelas and her sisters organized fiestas, such as the "Gran fiesta infantil" on Sunday July 29 1928. Mexicans of the "colonia" were invited to enjoy a night of song and dance and contribute to the

[37] Letter from Juana Ornelas to unspecified consul, August, 14, 1929, Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.
[38] Letter from Juana Ornelas to unspecified consul, August, 14, 1929, Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.
[39] Report by Escribiente Auxiliar Esperanza Calleja, of Mexican consul, date not specified, Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.

school: the admission fee was twenty-five cents for adults and ten cents for children. On that Sunday evening, the school children and Esperanza Ornelas performed seventeen musical numbers. Songs like "dying because of drinking" and "the concerns of a teacher," were likely meant to convey a set of values and morals, while "Las golondrinas" (The Swallows) would have struck an emotional chord with most migrant adults. Collectively, Juana Ornelas wanted the songs to "foster love for the homeland without them [migrants] themselves noticing." Moreover, she used these fiestas as an opportunity to speak with fathers and mothers about the importance of provided their children with an education.

The fiestas might have successfully fostered or reinforced nationalist sentiment, but they did not provide a significant financial boost. In fact, migrant parents were inconsistent in their monthly payments. According to Ornelas, some owed her two or three months of tuition and many were only able to pay fifteen or twenty cents a month. One father, for example, had five children who attended the school, but was unable to pay their monthly fees. Because they were dedicated students, Juana Ornelas encouraged them to attend. She hoped that in the future they would be able to help their father. While Juana Ornelas worried about finances, her major concern was the education of migrant children. "I don't work to make money, but for the love of the craft," she wrote to a Mexican consul. "If I was rich," she continued, "all my money would go to educating the needy, but I don't have money…"[40]

Seven months after opening the "Escuela modelo mexicana," she reached out to the Mexican consul. Ornelas hoped that the consul would organize a conference and tell parents that their children needed to learn to read Spanish before they could learn English. In regard to material conditions, she asked the consul for books used in Mexican schools, notebooks and pencils, and

[40] Letter from Juana Ornelas to unspecified consul, August, 14, 1929, Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.

financial assistance. The latter was her biggest concern. In fact, in her correspondence with the consul, she asked the state to take over the administrative tasks of running the school. "I would be inclined," she wrote, "to do whatever you order. For example, if the school would depend on the consulate and every parent of a family would put conditions about their kid and should manifest in a timely fashion and express to the teacher freely…"[41] There is no indication that the consul organized a conference or took over the school. The consul did, however, write to the SRE, who forwarded Ornelas' request for books and supplies to the SEP. By October of the same year, the Texas-based teacher received forty-nine copies of *Rébsamen* and *Las cinco maravillas*, twenty-four copies of *Corazon*, and ninety-nine notebooks.[42]

Juana Ornelas was not alone in her transnational efforts. J. Refugio Ramírez provides another example. Ramírez left Mexico in the early 1920s, but instead of settling in Texas or along the border, he continued north, to Kansas. By 1930, he had resided in Wichita for nine solid years. In a letter to the SEP, he explained that he migrated to obtain a few personal goals and not out of economic self-interest or fear of the Mexican Revolution. For Ramírez, individual progress consisted of three things. First, he wanted to learn English, which he accomplished in 1927. Second, he desired to acquire a trade that would provide him with some sustenance. Third, Ramírez desired to be useful to the "Azteca motherland." According to this migrant, Mexicans in the United States lived as outcasts, but maintained their love for the Mexican nation. He lamented that the consul was both inactive and out of touch with the Mexican colony. It was in this context that he sought to work on behalf of the nation.

In January 1930 he opened a school in Wichita, Kansas. He started with ten students, but after four months his group grew to forty. The school met once a week and he taught students

[41] Letter from Juana Ornelas to unspecified consul, August, 14, 1929, Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.
[42] See Expediente IV-264-21, SRE.

Spanish, history, and geography. He also hoped to foster his students' intellectual and physical abilities and "lo nacional."[43] Like honorary commissions, he asked the SEP for books used in Mexican schools. He also wanted to purchase a dictionary and books related to physical education.[44] The SEP mailed ten copies of *Historia patria* by Justo Sierra and ten copies of *Cultores y forjadores de México* by Humberto Tejera.[45] In a letter to the director of the Departamento de Biblotecas (Department of Libraries), this migrant educator expressed his deep gratitude to the Mexican state. "It is difficult," he wrote "for me to describe the great benefit of these books for the orphans of the fatherland."[46] Ramírez also took the opportunity to ask the Mexican government to take a more active role in the education of migrant children. Based on his experience with his forty student, he reasoned that there were thousands of brilliant Mexican children across the United States. Missing, according to Ramírez, was someone to uplift and lead the fight for national progress. "Why don't you exert influence so that national education can cross borders," he pleaded. There was no official response.[47]

School Closures and the Limits of Transnational Citizenship

The SEP, consuls, honorary commissions, teachers, and migrant parents worked diligently to open and operate schools for migrant children. Yet, even "La escuela México," which received support from the SEP, the Los Angeles consul, and "El pensador mexicano," struggled financially. In fact, it was in danger of closing just one year after it opened its doors to migrant children.[48] Remaining open was a major problem for all migrant schools, especially during the Great Depression. The Mexican government, Carmen Ramos informed a reporter at the *La Opinion*,

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43 J.R Ramírez to Ministro de Instruccion Publica, April 7, 1930, Expediente 592-111, Caja 31074, SEP, AGN.
44 J.R. Ramírez to Joaquín Ramírez Cabañas, May 15, 1930, Expediente 592-111, Caja 31074, SEP, AGN.
45 Movimiento de Almacen, May 9, 1930, Expediente 592-111, Caja 31074, SEP, AGN.
46 J.R. Ramírez to Joaquín Ramírez Cabañas, May 15, 1930, Expediente 592-111, Caja 31074, SEP, AGN.
47 J.R Ramírez to Ministro de Instruccion Publica, April 7, 1930, Expediente 592-111, Caja 31074, SEP, AGN.
48 "Gran Disputa en Belvedere: La Escuela 'México' en Peligro de Desaparecer," *La Opinion*, July 31, 1927.

"only has resources to cover the pressing educational needs of our country and until now it has not been able to dedicate a portion of its budget towards the education of Mexican children residing outside the nation."[49] For migrant schools to succeed, she argued, the state would need to cover teachers' salaries and the rental cost associating with these schools. The cost, she lamented, was too much for the Mexican government as well as for "our compatriots."[50] Indeed, after two years of working in Los Angeles, she concluded that even with the necessary funds this ambitious educational project would not succeed.[51]

In addition to financial struggles, migrant schools faced opposition from U.S. officials. Below, I focus on institutional challenges in Los Angeles and Texas from 1928 to 1930 and the controversy over a "socialist book" in 1939. After two years of working "tirelessly" to increase the number of Mexican schools, Carman Ramos wrote to Leopoldo Kiel, the Director of the Departamento de Enseñanza Primaria y Normal and asked for permission to return to Mexico.[52] While she remained committed to the project, Ramos worried that Americans would fight the Mexican schools "diplomatically, and through legal or illegal means."[53] In an article for *La Opinion*, she noted that the Los Angeles Health Department used hygiene as an excuse to shut down these schools.[54] In her communication with the SEP, she provided an example. The school in question was located on the property of a Mexican migrant and was doing fairly well. Ninety migrant children attended the school and the teacher, Ramos noted, received forty dollars per

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[49] "3 Escuelas Para Educar 80,000 Niños," *La Opinion,* October 12, 1930.
[50] Carmen Ramos to Professor Leopoldo Kiel, August 12 1930, Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente R 2/6, SEP, AGN.
[51] Carmen Ramos is quoted at length in a letter from the SEP to the SRE, October 4, 1930, Expediente IV-264-1, SEP, AGN.
[52] Carmen Ramos to Professor Leopoldo Kiel, August 12 1930, Coleccion Personal Sobresaliente, Expediente Personal de Carmen Ramos del Rio, Expediente R 2/6, SEP, AGN.
[53] Carmen Ramos is quoted at length in a letter from the SEP to the SRE, October 4, 1930, Expediente IV-264-1, SRE.
[54] "3 Escuelas Para Educar 80,000 Niños," *La Opinio,* October 12, 1930.

month. In September of 1930, American officials demanded that the water fountain be relocated. The Mexicans in charge obliged. Yet, American officials also informed the teacher that she could only work with a total of thirty to thirty-five students. Ramos suspended classes for two weeks in order to provide Mexican migrants an opportunity to evaluate the situation and to avoid conflict with American officials. In the end, American officials notified the teacher that she would not be allowed to re-open the school. In another instance, American officials found an alternative pretext. A former educator from Aguascalientes taught Spanish language classes to adults. Americans provided the building, which Ramos claimed was inferior to the one cited above. However, the building was taken away because the Spanish class attracted more adult students that English class.[55]

In a letter to the SRE, the SEP quoted Ramos' report and asked the SRE to inquire with Mexican consular officials.[56] In his response to the SRE, the Los Angeles Consul Rafael de la Colina agreed with Ramos, but framed resistance to Mexican schools within a legal context. Schools in the state of California, he informed the SRE, were required to fulfill a number of requirements. The buildings were required to uphold ventilation and hygienic standards and an occupancy of no more than forty students. Moreover, children needed to attend the the state's public schools during the day. In addition, afterschool classes should not tire "the mind of the child." In other words, they should be of limited duration. State and local authorities had the power to approve both the curriculum and textbooks. Local authorities also had the right to intervene and observe any of the schools' programs. These regulations, according to the consul, were

[55] Carmen Ramos is quoted at length in a letter from the SEP to the SRE, October 4, 1930, Expediente IV-264-1, SRE.
[56] Carmen Ramos is quoted at length in a letter from the SEP to the SRE, October 4 1930, Expediente IV-264-1, SRE.

insurmountable. Following Ramos, he argued that state authorities had ample ammunition to target these school and that U.S. officials would ultimately halt the development of schools as soon as they attained any real significance.

Rafael de la Colina was sympathetic to U.S. officials' resistance to Mexican schools. He explained to the SRE that children born in U.S. territory were granted U.S. citizenship and that the state would do everything possible to impede "foreign" influences and things that "challenge, divert, or cancel" the work of "Americanization." Yet, as a representative of the Mexican state he envisioned these children as part of the Mexican nation. "This issue is of great importance for our homeland, because it entails the total loss of thousands of Mexican children born in this country," he wrote to the SRE. Instead of abandoning the project and Mexican children, the consul asked the SEP to study the problem and find a solution. He even suggested that Los Angeles County could serve as a place of experimentation.[57]

In Texas, Mexican consular officials responded to school closures by adopting a contradictory position: they simultaneously tried to respect U.S. sovereignty and foster nationalist sentiment among migrant children. In the fall of 1928, local officials closed two schools in the border town of San Benito, Texas. In late November, U.S. officials posted a notice on one of the schools. It declared that English was the official language and that schools should teach students to love the flag with the "bars and stripes." According to an article in the Spanish language newspaper *La Prensa,* the superintendent of the school district was responsible for this action. The author of the article complained that "North American" English language schools in Mexico were allowed to operate and were not forced to love the "flag that bears the eagle, serpent, and cactus."[58]

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[57] Los Angeles Consul Rafael de la Colina to SRE, Nov 26, 1930, Expediente IV-264-1, SRE.
[58] "Han sido cerradas varias escuelas donde se enseña el idioma español," *La Prensa*, November 30, 1928, Expediente IV-264-54, SRE.

The consul at Corpus Christi reported the incident to the SRE, who then instructed Enrique Santibáñez, the consul general in San Antonio, to investigate.[59] According to Santibáñez, the consul at Corpus Christi shared *La Prensa*'s nationalist sentiment and frustration in regards to school closures. For Santibáñez, the consul at Corpus Christi lacked an understanding of U.S. history. Unlike Mexico, argued the consul general, the United States received people from all over the world in order to populate its vast territory. This created the risk that an entire ethnic group within a geographical area might attempt to segregate from the "union." For the consul, the English-only public school was not an arbitrary or anti-Mexican action, but an attempt at nation building. Santibáñez ordered Mexican consuls in Texas to abide by the law and to cooperate with U.S. authorities.

Mexicans continued to establish schools and local American educators continued to shut them down. In 1930, officials in Houston closed a school led by Cruz M. Montemayor. Mexican families, according to Montemayor, were eager to send their children to Mexican schools and to "avoid losing ties that united them to la patria."[60] Montemayor was troubled by the closure and asked the SEP if Mexicans were allowed to establish schools.[61] As usual, the SEP and SRE discussed the matter. The SRE insured the SEP that the consul general in San Antonio and the consul in Houston would look into the legality of the closures.[62]

The consul general's note to the SRE was short and to the point: he simply stated that the authorities were within the law to close down these schools.[63] The consul in Houston, however, was much more thorough and cited both Article 2892 and 2893 of Texas state law. Article 2892

[59] Head of department to consul general of Mexico at San Antonio Texas, December 21, 1928. Expediente IV-264-54, SRE.
[60] SEP to SRE, June 6, 1930, Expediente IV-264-33, SRE.
[61] SEP to SRE. June 6, 1930, Expediente IV-264-33, SRE.
[62] SRE to SEP, June 17, 1930, Expediente IV-264-33, SRE.
[63] Consul general, Expediente IV-264-33, SRE.

required children between the ages of eight and fourteen to attend a public school. Moreover, children were required to attend no less than one hundred days per scholastic year. Children could also attend a private or parochial school as long as the school included a course on good citizenship and made "English language the basis of instruction in all subjects." The consul at Houston and the consul general offered diverging interpretations of state law. For the consul, state law did not prohibit the creation of Mexican schools. Schools, he argued, could teach most of the material in English and include Spanish. He provided two examples. The school run by Montemayor, the consul claimed, was closed because of its "horrible sanitary conditions:" it lacked chairs, good ventilation, and to make matters worse, the children drank water from the same cup. A school in the same city, directed by Leonor Ancira, however, remained open. According to the consul, it was "truly Mexican" and the teacher also taught the students English.[64] Thus, it complied with the law. Consul General Santibáñez disagreed with the consul:

> …in saying you can open a Mexican school and teach in Spanish as long as do not neglect to teach English, here you are in error. The base of education must be in English and no material can be taught in any other language. Spanish is taught like other material, but I repeat, not as a base for instruction. If you don't agree with me and continue thinking that you can teach Spanish, please give me the reason why."[65]

Enrique Santibáñez reprimanded the consul in Houston and ordered consuls in Texas to cooperate with local authorities. However, he also supported efforts to educate migrant children. He attended parties organized by the local educator Atilaño Saldaña and directed the consul in Kansas City, Kansas to work with local migrants to establish a new school. According to Consul Alfredo Vazquez of Kansas City, the majority of migrant children in Kansas were unable to read in Spanish and knew very little "about Mexican history." On June 21 1930, Vazquez organized a meeting at the "Hijos de México's" hall and proposed the creation of a new school. Those in

[64] Consulate at Houston to SRE, June 30, 1930, Expediente IV-264-33, SRE.
[65] Consul general to consul at Houston, July 7, 1930, Expediente IV-264-33, SRE.

attendance enthusiastically agreed and appointed Mr. Felipe List as the school's new teacher. Migrant parents agreed to furnish the school and pay for Mr. List's salary. List held classes three evenings out of the week at the "Hijos de México's" space. Santibáñez advised local organizers to remain out of sight, to refrain from any "ostentatious" activities, and to avoid publicizing the existence of the school.[66] Throughout the United States, migrants held public fundraisers and used local Spanish language newspapers to attract new students, to announce the opening of the school, and to provide the Mexican community with important updates.

Santibáñez's actions in Kansas City accurately represent his official policy towards the founding and supporting of Mexican schools. Indeed, in the summer of 1930, he wrote to the consuls in his jurisdiction to address the future of Mexican schools in the United States. He informed Mexican officials that the creation of Mexican schools in the United States violated Texas law. All public and private schools, he noted, were required to conduct instruction in English. Moreover, migrant parents who enrolled their children in Mexican schools were not abiding by the law and ran the risk of incurring penalties. It is not clear what the penalties could have been, but it was not a benevolent prospect for parents, especially those without U.S. citizenship. By supporting these schools, consular officials also placed themselves in a difficult situation. "One of the obligations of the consular body," Santibáñez wrote, "is to respect and not contradict the law of the country where one is located, the Mexican cannot assist in these schools…" And, yet, as in the examples recounted above, the consul general provided consuls with room to maneuver. According to Santibáñez, the authorities of some counties allowed Spanish-language schools to exist "because of their relative insignificance." Those associated with Mexican

[66] As the school in Kansas City was opening, another one opened in Bridgeport, Texas. Founded by the honorary commission and under the jurisdiction of the consul in Dallas, its teacher taught thirty-five students. Santibáñez offered the same caution to the consul in Dallas. See consul general to consul at Dallas, June 25, 1930, Expediente IV-264-17, SRE.

schools, the consul general advised, should avoid having official events and publishing anything about the schools in the local press.[67]

As one might expect, Mexican consuls continued to take an active role in the education of migrant children. A case from Cement, Texas in December 1930 provides an illustrative example. After founding a school for forty students, the organizers asked the consul in Dallas to help them obtain Mexican books used in Mexican primary schools. The consul wrote to the SRE, who then wrote to the SEP.[68] By January of 1931, the SEP ordered books for the migrant school in Cement.[69]

In writing about these schools, Chicano/a scholars focus on the late 1920s and early 1930s. In their timeline and narrative, they mark 1928 as the apex of Mexican schools and 1930 as the decline and eventual demise of this transnational and "top-down" educational project. However, we know that failure and resilience were defining characteristics of this educational projects and that most schools operated for a very short time period. These factors make it difficult to definitively trace the numbers of schools and their locations. A close reading of *La Opinion* and research in Mexican archives reveals that at least eleven schools operated in Southern California as late as 1939. While the majority were located in the greater Los Angeles area, schools existed in remote areas like Ventura County.[70] In the late 1930s, migrants continued to collaborate with the Mexican government and to receive books from the SEP. Indeed, it was a book that sparked the interest and opposition of U.S. authorities. This episode points to another motive for the closure of Mexican schools: Mexico's socialist education.

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[67] Consul general to consuls in the jurisdiction, August 22, 1930; consul general to SRE, Expediente IV-264-17, SRE.
[68] SRE to Subsecretario of the SEP, December 6, 1930, Expediente 592-167, Caja 31074, SEP, AGN.
[69] SRE to Consul General, January 5, 1931, Expediente 592-167, Caja 31074, SEP, AGN.
[70] "Escuelas Mexicanas: Fomentemos su Desarollo," *La Opinion*, December 1, 1939.

On June 1 1939, Rito R. Madrid from the Coordinating Council of Los Angeles walked into the Los Angeles consul and provided Consul Rodolfo Salazar with a report concerning the use of the Mexican book *Simiente* in a migrant school in Pacoima. The Mexicans associated with this school replicated the model that migrants and the state established in the mid-to-late 1920s. The honorary commission spearheaded the effort to found the school, migrant parents contributed one dollar a month for the teacher's salary, and the SEP mailed books. Published in 1937, *Simiente* was used in first, second, and third grade classes in Mexico's urban primary schools and was part of President Cárdenas's socialist education. It narrated Mexican history and international events from a Marxist framework and provided examples of working class solidarity and liberation. The report took note of an inscription and a stamp on the inside cover. "This book is property of the Mexican State. Its sale will be severely punished," read the inscription. The stamp, which read "honorary commission, Pacoima, California," indicated its destination and current owner. The report continued in a chronological fashion and summarized four lessons from *Simiente*. Like the inscription and stamp, the implications of the text were self-evident for both American and Mexican officials: the content and message of the book was in stark opposition to the United States' anti-communist stance.

Shortly after Madrid's visit, Los Angeles Consul Rodolfo Salazar forwarded the report to the SRE. He was worried that it could reach the "Dies Committee" in Washington D.C.[71] Two weeks later, General Eduardo Hay of the SRE wrote to the consul generals in San Antonio and El Paso, Texas, and San Francisco, California. He began his letter by clearly articulating that this was not an issue open for debate. For Hay, the validity of the Coordinating Council's report or investigation was irrelevant. As diplomatic and consular representatives, consuls were required to

[71] Los Angeles Consul Rodolfo Salazar to SRE, June 1, 1939, Expediente IV-706-2, SRE.

follow Mexico's approach to international relations. This meant, Hay explained, that consuls were required to "adhere to strict respect for opinions of the countries which it maintains friendly relations." More importantly, he outlined an efficient and quick solution to the problem:

> It is advisable, if the honorary commissions or other similar Mexican organizations are the ones asking for the material that provoked these suspicions, to use the same means to avoid the appearance of an official action from this office, in regards to the corresponding authorities. In a private meeting you can call the representatives of the Mexican organizations and with the necessary tact convince them of the need for them to pick up the books. Yet, without depriving the children of our compatriots of this book. To this end, they can use it in their homes.[72]

The consul general in San Antonio mailed this note to the consuls in his jurisdiction. He quoted Hay's letter and added additional, more specific, instructions. He asked his consuls to visit libraries and cultural institutions established by honorary commissions and to pick up the book *Simiente* as well as any other books that could be viewed as socialist. Then, in a "confidential note," they were to inform the secretary (and copy the consul general) of the books picked up and provide their personal observations.[73] Consuls in Galveston and in Del Rio responded. The consul at Galveston noted that they were in process of discretely picking up copies of *Simiente* and would have them in their offices in a few days.[74] Mexican officials at the Del Rio consul found fifty copies of *Simiente* within their jurisdiction. While the note implied that books found in private homes could be left alone, the consuls proceeded to "very discretely" pick them up.[75]

General Eduardo Hay also wrote to the SEP. He quoted his entire letter to the consul generals and added two important details. First, he speculated that it was very likely that Los Angeles (where the conflict erupted) was not the only city that received books from the SEP.

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[72] Quoted in letter from Consul General Omar Josefe to consul of San Antonio Texas, July 11, 1939, Expediente IV-706-2, SRE.
[73] Consul General Josefe Omar to consuls, July 11, 1939, Expediente IV-706-2, SRE.
[74] Romeo Domínguez G, El Canciller de 3a at Mexican consul at Galveston, Texas to SRE, July 24, 1939, Expediente IV-706-2, SRE.
[75] Consul at Del Rio, Texas to SRE, July 18, 1939, Expediente IV-706-2, SRE.

Second, the secretary told the SEP to carefully review any books destined for Mexican children in the United States. For Hay it was important for the SEP to understand the mentality of the "North American," particularly as it related to anti-communism. However, it was just as important for Mexican children to continue to receive textbooks, which in the words of Hay, were "indispensable to nourish their spirit and foster in them knowledge about and love for their patria."[76] In the end, he wanted to resolve the issue and prevent news of the book reaching the "Dies Committee' in Washington, D.C. He was particularly concerned that if the report landed it the wrong hands it would be used to create "confusion about Mexico" and to distort the politics of the Mexican revolution.[77]

The SRE and Mexican consuls' effort to remove *Simiente* from migrant schools and homes mirrors the labor of Mexican representatives during the late 1920s. They all tried to foster national sentiment among migrant children while practicing diplomacy. Like in the late 1920s, local American officials tried to curb the Mexican state's influence on Mexican migrant children.

Conclusion

Migrants and Mexican officials shared a desire to teach migrant children Spanish and Mexican history and to foster within them a love for the Mexican "patria." It was from this shared sentiment that a range of actors worked to open and run schools for migrant children. Far from a "top-down" effort from Mexico City, the schools represent a site where transnational citizenship and nation building coincided. Honorary commissions, migrant organization, and individual migrants relied on financial support from the larger Mexican community. Even Spanish language newspapers aided in this effort. In Southern California, *La Opinion* provided migrants and consuls with an important venue to advertise the schools and to transmit their message. The Mexican state

[76] Eduardo Hay to Mexican embassy, Washington, D.C., June 17, 1939, Expediente IV-706-2, SRE.
[77] Eduardo Hay to Mexican embassy, Washington, D.C. June 17, 1939, Expediente IV-706-2, SRE.

provided limited, but important resources. The consuls encouraged migrants to start schools and navigated the political context. But, perhaps, most importantly, they connected migrants and migrant organizations to the SEP, which provided essential educational material and aid. From 1926 to 1930, the SEP placed two of its educators in Los Angeles and from 1924 to 1939 it mailed countless books and magazines to schools located throughout the United States.

If the labor and investment of these transnational actors represents a form of citizenship, it also signals the limits of practicing Mexican citizenship in the United States. The state never committed significant financial support to cover teachers' salaries or to rent spaces to house the schools. The cost to finance these educational projects proved to be too much for working-class migrants. This was not the only obstacle. While Mexican children were segregated in public schools, those born in the U.S. were granted U.S. citizenship. U.S. officials in both Texas and California used the law to close down a number of schools. However, the absence of well-funded Mexican state program to open and run these schools is likely the reason that Mexican schools existed throughout the 1930s. Lastly, as the following chapter demonstrates, Mexican schools were not the only transnational educational project that brought together migrant parents, U.S.-born Mexicans, and the Mexican state.

Chapter Two

Migrant Letters, the State, and Scholarships for Children of Migrants, 1930-1945

"I have the honor to direct to you these short phrases," wrote Chavela Díaz to President Lázaro Cárdenas in June 1939. "I am writing," she continued, "to ask for help." A resident of Julesburg, Colorado, the eighteen-year-old student came from a very poor family, but through hard work and sacrifice graduated from the local high school with high marks. She was a member of various local clubs, participated in the activities of the Mexican community, and was studious and popular. A recent graduate, she hoped to attend college and become an English or Spanish professor "among the Mexican people."[1] In order to accomplish her educational goals, she wrote and sought support from the president of Mexico.

As a child of Mexican migrants who came of age in the early-to-mid twentieth century, Chavela Díaz formed part of the "Mexican American generation." Because this cohort was composed predominately of United States citizens, Chicano/a scholars have emphasized their commitment to U.S. civil rights and first class citizenship. "Mexican Americans," claims Mario García, "expected more from American life than immigrants. For 'Mexican Americans,' there was no going back to Mexico."[2] However, Chavela Díaz's "short phrases" to President Cárdenas push against this national framework. Rather than an isolated case, her letter was part of a chorus of transnational requests. From 1930 to 1945, honorary commissions, migrant organizations, consular

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[1] Chavela Díaz to Lázaro Cárdenas, June 5, 1939, Expediente 534.1-961, Ramo Presidentes, Lázaro Cárdenas, Archivo General de la Nación, México, D.F. (Hereafter, LC, AGN).

[2] Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (Yale Press: 1991). There is a small and growing body of literature that seeks to complicate the trajectory from Mexican to "Mexican American." See José M. Alamillo, "Playing Across Borders: Transnational Sport and Identities in Southern California and Mexico, 1930-1945" *Pacific Historical Review,* Vol. 79, No. 3 (2010). Thomas A. Guglielmo illustrates that even securing civil rights legislation in the early 1940s took on a transnational dimension. See "Fighting for Caucasian Rights: Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and the Transnational Struggle for Civil Rights in World War II Texas" *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 92, No. 4, (2006).

officials, American educators, migrant parents, and migrant children asked the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Secretary of Foreign Relations, hereafter SRE), Mexican universities and institutions, and Mexican presidents for *becas* (scholarships). Writing from Arizona, Colorado, California, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, Chicago, and Oklahoma, authors narrated the sacrifices and working-class origins of Mexican youth, their characters and values, and their nationalist sentiment and desire to contribute to the Mexican nation. These carefully constructed letters echoed the post-revolutionary state's discourse on social mobility through education and its goal to create university students who would contribute to the nations' economic and technical needs.

Despite the Mexican consuls' enthusiasm and Mexicans' nationalist language, individual requests for support were denied or unanswered. Collectively, however, their pleas pushed the Mexican government to incorporate Mexicans born in the United States into the state's educational system. In 1939, under the leadership of President Cárdenas, the newly founded Instituto Técnico Industrial de Tijuana created twenty scholarships for Mexican students based in Southern California. Five years later, during World War II, the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura de Chapingo, in Mexico City, offered an additional five scholarships.

The number of scholarships paled in comparison to schools and institutions established by the Mexican government to bring peasants, Indians, and soldiers' children into the national fold. Twenty-five students, moreover, was a fraction of the number of pupils that attended the Mexican language schools established in the United States by the Mexican state, migrants, and consuls from 1926 to 1939. However, the number of scholarships reflects the small pool of eligible students, which was directly contingent on the low high school graduation rates of Mexicans in the United States. Indeed, when compared to the number of college-going students in the United States, twenty-five scholarships was a substantial amount. Moreover, these scholarships are significant

because they emerged primarily from the efforts of migrant parents and students. In the face of U.S. discrimination, racism, and limited educational opportunities, migrant parents and their children looked to Mexico to continue their schooling. With help from the Mexican consuls, Mexicans born in the United States traveled to Mexico and benefited from Mexico's post-revolutionary university system. Mexican migrants and U.S.-born Mexicans made claims to Mexican citizenship by visiting Mexican consuls and, like peasants in Michoacán, veterans of the Mexican revolution, and Chinese-Mexican families repatriated to China, by penning letters to state officials.[3] This transnational history of migrant schooling contributes to our understanding of the "Mexican American generation," to the history of schooling, and to migrant-state relations in the post-revolutionary period.

Writing to the Mexican State

In their letters, authors provided the state with a portrait of migrant life and narrated the many obstacles that impact their "educational pipeline."[4] For poor and working-class families, sending one or several children to school was a major commitment. Chavela Díaz, whose story opened this chapter, informed President Cárdenas that her family was very poor and that they sacrificed very much to "give me the little education that I have."[5] In his letter to the same president, Juan Hidalgo, who was born in Leon Guanajuato in 1915 and migrated with his family

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3 Marjorie Becker, *Setting the Virgin on Fire: Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán Peasants, and the Redemption of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995); Thomas Rath, *Myths of Demilitarization in Postrevolutionary Mexico, 1920-1960* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Julia María Camacho Schiavone, *Chinese Mexicans: Transpacific Migration and the Search for a Homeland, 1910-1960* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

4 Generally defined as the path and progress of students from kindergarten to college. Much of the literature focuses on the contemporary period, noting the continued underrepresentation of Mexican students in secondary and higher education. It is relevant for this chapter because it helps us understand the challenges that faced Mexican students who desired to attend a four-year university. For more on the definition of "educational pipeline" See Daniel G. Solórzano and Ronald W. Solórzano, "The Chicano Educational Experience: A Framework for Effective Schools in Chicano Communities" *Educational Policy*, Vol. 9, 3. (1995).

5 Chavela Díaz to Lázaro Cárdenas, June 5, 1939, Expediente 534.1-961, LC, AGN.

to the United States in 1922, wrote that he was member of a "poor family." He credited "sublime inspiration" as the source of his academic success.[6]

For a few families, the illness or death of the head of household disrupted their already precarious economic situation and altered the division of labor. In 1940, Vicente García López, from Santa Paula, California, wrote to the Los Angeles Consul Rodolfo Salazar in hopes of securing for himself and his brother a scholarship from the government to study "ciencia médica." Vicente and his younger brother, he informed the consul, were forced to drop out of school when their father became ill.[7] His brother managed to complete some secondary education and he attended one year of high school. Antonio Padilla, born in Uruapan, Michoacán, provides another example. In 1924, fourteen-year-old Antonio migrated to the United States with his family. He stayed in school and even enrolled in Curtis Wright Aeronautical University in Chicago, Illinois. Antonio's educational trajectory was placed in jeopardy by the death of his father, who supported the family and his studies. Like many Americans and Mexicans during the 1930s, this young Mexican student was unable to secure employment. The university responded by suspending his studies.[8] Carlos López was also affected by the death of his father. In 1919, the López family migrated to the United States and settled in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Just two years after their long journey north, Marcos, the father of the family, died and left the mother in charge of raising a young eight-year-old Carlos. From the time of Marco's death until 1931, the mother worked diligently and suffered "many types of hardships" to keep her son in school.[9]

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6 Juan Hidalgo to Lázaro Cárdenas, November 17, 1935, Expediente 534.1-354, LC, AGN.
7 Rodolfo Salazar to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, May 27, 1940. Expediente III-2385-19, Acervo Histórico Diplomático de Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, México D.F. (Hereafter, SRE).
8 Antonio Padilla to Secretario de Educación Pública, No date, Expediente IV-670-6, SRE.
9 Consul H. Valdés to Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, July 6, 1931, Expediente IV-670-9, SRE.

Poverty, personal hardship, and institutional racism combined to push Mexican students out of the educational system and resulted in low high school graduation rates and underrepresentation on college campuses. Joaquín Gallardo, for example, attended San Bernardino High School and became a member of the California Scholarship Federation after making the California Scholarship List for four semesters. Gallardo, according to the San Bernardino newspaper *The Sun*, was the "first Mexican boy to achieve this honor." This was a significant accomplishment, according to the article, because so few Mexicans attended the high school.[10] A letter from Frank Dooley, Chairman of the Welfare Board at the University of California, Los Angeles, to President Cárdenas attests to the lack of representation of Mexicans from working-class backgrounds on campuses across Southern California. Writing on behalf of Alberto Sánchez in 1936, Dooley stated that children from his background rarely attended secondary school and, to his knowledge, the young UCLA student "was the only of his social status that attends a university in Southern California.[11] Dooley's anecdotal impression was fairly accurate. Scholars estimate that "Mexican Americans" made up less than one percent of college-going students, which was well below their percentage of the total population.[12]

The underrepresentation of Mexicans on high school and college campuses made for a particularly isolating experience. This was more than apparent to the aforementioned UCLA administrator. "He has struggled in circumstances where there has not even been one member of

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[10] Clipping found in Expediente IV-670-14, SRE.

[11] Frank Dooley, Chairman of the Welfare Board, University of California at Los Angeles, to Lázaro Cárdenas, May 14, 1936, Expediente 534.1-211, LC, AGN.

[12] San Miguel Jr. and Valencia, "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo." In his 1930 study on education in Texas, Herschel Thurman Manuel found that Mexican students made up .49 percent of all college students in the state. Richard R. Valencia, "The Plight of Chicano Students: An Overview of Schooling Conditions and Outcomes," in *Chicano School Failure and Success: Past, Present, and Future,* ed. Valencia, R. Richard. Third edition. (New York and London: Routledge, 2011). Focusing on the relationship between the University of Arizona and the University of Sonora, Geraldo Cadava argues that very few "Mexican Americans" participated in study abroad programs of the 1960s and 1970s. See Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground: The Making of a Sunbelt Borderland* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2013).

his race to encourage or simply serve as a companion in his labor," he wrote to President Cárdenas. While María Bustos Jefferson, a daughter of Mexican migrants who settled in Ventura, reflected positively on her education at Occidental College during the early 1930s, she recalled being told by her friend to "say she was Spanish," since it would be easier to make friends.[13] By passing as Spanish, her friend's suggestion implied, she could more fully participated in the social life of her university. The young Occidental student continued identifying as Mexican.

Mexico's Changing University System

After the revolution, Mexico's educational institutions underwent massive transformations. Mexican officials and educators envisioned the country's universities and students as major actors in the nation's social and economic transformation. They tasked Mexican universities with equipping students with the professional expertise needed to advance the economic development of the Mexican nation. For Mexican officials and the public, the university—particularly technical schools—provided working-class students with a vehicle for social mobility. During this period, the state founded universities across the nation and increased its budget for higher education. Moreover, government and educational agencies standardized their curriculums.

While most working-class students did not attend the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), by 1929 it served as the model for the entire university system.[14] According to historian Michael Burke, under José Vasconcelos' leadership UNAM sought "to train teachers and provide cultural services, to offer leadership in the creation of a truly Mexican culture; and to instill future leaders with a social conscience as well as professional expertise."[15] The school of Medicine

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[13] María Bustos Jefferson, Interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 11, 1971, Mexican American Community History Project. The Center for Oral and Public History, California State University, Fullerton, Fullerton, California.
[14] David E. Lorey, *The University System and Economic Development in Mexico Since 1929* (California: Stanford University Press, 1993).
[15] Michael Burke, "The University of Mexico and the Revolution, 1910-1940," *Americas* 34, No.2 (1997), 259.

and the school of Engineering and Chemical Science provide two key examples of the new emphasis on the social sciences, social and economic problems, and hands-on experience.[16] As part of their course work medical students provided residents of working-class neighborhoods with free medical services. The school of Engineering and Chemical Science awarded students credit for working in factories or government construction projects.[17] In short, the model university student was expected to adopt a class-consciousness and use newly gained knowledge and expertise to contribute to the nation's development.

This was by no means a smooth process. Throughout the 1930s, faculty and students debated UNAM's relationship with the state, particularly the university's intellectual and financial autonomy. At the heart of the matter, according to Michael Burke, was the "freedom to determine for themselves how best to serve Mexico."[18] In addition to the question of academic freedom, there was a discrepancy between the training and employing Mexican professionals. This is perhaps best illustrated by the employment of foreign engineers on large irrigation projects in the early 1920s.[19] However, the number of universities and careers did expand. Comparing the number of graduates from 1901 to 1927 and 1928 to 1940, David Lorey found that three times as many students obtained a university degree.

Technical schools were part of this transformation within the university system and are particularly pertinent to this chapter. Before 1910, a few technical schools existed, but technical education was not tied to national industries or the economy.[20] In the 1920s, and especially the

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16 Burke, "The University of Mexico."
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid, 273.
19 Rebeca de Gortari Rabiela, "Educación y conciencia nacional: Los ingenieros después de la revolución Mexicana," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* Vol. 49, no.3. (Jul.-Sep., 1987).
20 Francisco Larroyo, *Historia Comparada de la Educación en México* (Séptima Edición Aumentada. México, D.F. Editorial Porrúa, S.A., 1964); Max Calvillo Velasco and Lourdes Rocío Ramírez Palacios, *Setenta años de historia del Instituto Politécnico Nacional*, 5 tomos (México: Instituto Politécnico Nacional/Dirección de Publicaciones, 2006).

1930s, professional careers became linked to the country's financial growth, to social mobility for working-class students, and to a vision of students as productive citizens. The formation of Instituto Politécnico Nacional (IPN) in 1936 marked an important shift as it placed all of the SEP's "escuelas tecnicas" (technical schools) under its jurisdiction and worked to homogenize technical education. While there were numerous changes to the curriculum in the 1930s and 1940s, the IPN offered a range of educational levels that included "prevocational," "vocational," and "superior." "Prevocational" consisted of two years of general studies, which were intended to provide students with a general understanding of major concepts and ideas. During the two years of "vocational," students selected and prepared for their chosen profession. Those that failed their first or second year could aspire to become an "obrero calificado," effectively completing their studies. Those that passed, continued onto "superior" and completed a professional career.[21] In short, technical education provided students with "lateral exits": the opportunity to gain employment before finishing a degree.[22] This was an advantageous educational structure for working-class students and reflected the institution's goal of educating students who had limited financial sources."[23] Using data from the 1938 student body, Max Calvillo Velasco y Lourdes Rocío Ramírez Palacios found that around twenty-five percent of students' fathers or heads of household were workers, peasants, or artisans, a quarter were government employees, approximately thirteen percent were merchants or farmers, and another ten percent "did not depend on anyone and sustained themselves by working."[24]

The IPN's efforts to embrace working-class students mirrored its regional ambitions. One of its goals, proclaimed the SEP's annual yearbook, was to "assure that its doors be open to anyone

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21 Max Calvillo Velasco and Ramírez Palacios, *Setenta años de historia.*
22 Lorey, *The University System*.
23 Lorey, *The University System;* Calvillo Velasco and Ramírez Palacios, *Setenta años de historia.*
24 Max Calvillo Velasco and Ramírez Palacios, *Setenta años de historia.*

who aspired to complete a technical career in any of the nation's regions."[25] The IPN's effort reached the U.S.-Mexico border. The founding of the Instituto Técnico Industrial de Tijuana in 1939, according to Max Calvillo Velasco, "had deep symbolic importance and transcendence for the collective imaginary."[26]

Migrants, U.S.-born Children, and Mexico's University System

Mexico's educational system benefited from the transnational movement and network of American and Mexican intellectuals and academics. For Mexicans, the ideas and theories of John Dewey were particularly important. American educators and intellectuals, on the other hand, viewed Mexico's approach to its cultural and ethnic diversity as a potential model to solve the United States' "race problem."[27] Mexican migrant families provide an additional and unexplored transnational dimension to the Mexican history of education and Mexican nation-state formation.[28] It was during the expansion of the university system, the espousing of a new discourse and language about the university and its students, and the state's push for social mobility through higher education, that Mexicans in the United States requested help from the Mexican state and its representatives. Through the act of writing, Mexicans abroad defined children of migrants born in the United States as Mexican citizens worthy of the state's resources and investment. In addition

[25] Quoted in Max Calvillo Velasco, "El Instituto Técnico Industrial de Agua Caliente y lo 'nacional' del Instituto Politécnico Nacional," Conferencia presentada en el Centro de Estudios de Bachillerato 4/1 Maestro Moisés Sáenz Garza, el 21 de Octubre de 2009, con motivo del 25 aniversario del plante. Accessed April 13, 2015, Instituto Politécnico Nacional, la técnia al servicio de la patria, repositorio digital institucional, http://www.repositoriodigital.ipn.mx/handle/123456789/5480

[26] Ibid, 4.

[27] Ruben Flores, *Backroads Pragmatists: Mexico's Melting Pot and Civil Rights in the United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

[28] In a recent essay, Eugenia Roldán Vera urged scholars to explore the "supranational dimension" of Mexico's educational system. See "Para 'desnacionalizar' la historia de la educación: reflexiones en torno a la diffusion mundial de la escuela lancasteriana en el primer tercio del siglo XIX," *Revista Mexicana de Historia de la Educación* Vol. 1, núm 2, (2013).

to narrating students' personal challenges, letter writers lauded their accomplishments and character, affirmed their affinity towards Mexico, and promised to contribute to the nation.

By associating students' character with their scholarly achievements, authors connected the personal with the academic. In a letter to the SRE, Luis P. Castro, the consul at Phoenix, Arizona, described José L. Ibarra as a "hard working and honorable man" who was "intelligent and diligent."[29] Writing to the Los Angeles consul in 1942, Ramón R. Limón of the Pasadena honorary commission described David Jenaro Troncoso as a "studious person, honorable and with very good record."[30] An eighteen-year-old Chavela Díaz informed Presidency Cárdenas that she was "studious" and "very popular with all types of people."[31] Most evaluations of Mexican youth were no more than a few sentences. The letters concerning Joaquín Gallardo, the San Bernardino High School graduate mentioned earlier, and Alberto Sánchez, an undergraduate at UCLA, were much more descriptive. The consul forwarded a clipping from the local English language newspaper which boasted of the student's accomplishments and included letters of recommendation from the school principle George R. Momyer, the American history teacher Nelle B. Ratcliffe, Thomas Cooper, and B.O. Baer and Clara Keeler, who taught mathematics and English, respectively. "He is sincere and earnest, with a keenly intelligent mind" and "gentle and courteous in manner," wrote Keeler. The history teacher found the Mexican student to be "a gentleman and a good citizen," while Cooper described him as "an excellent student in every way."[32] Frank Dooley, Chairman of the Welfare Board at the University of California, Los Angeles, provided President Cárdenas with a lengthy profile of Alberto Sánchez.[33] The young

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[29] Consul Luis P. Castro to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, June 30, 1931, Expediente IV-670-10, SRE.
[30] Consul Rodolfo Salazar to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, June 15, 1942, Expediente III-2385-19, SRE.
[31] Chavela Díaz to Lázaro Cárdenas, June 5, 1939, Expediente 534.1-961, LC, AGN.
[32] Clipping and letters of recommendation were included in correspondence from Fernando Alatorre, Mexican Consul at San Bernardino, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, Expediente IV-670-14, SRE.
[33] Frank Dooley, Chairman of the Welfare Board, University of California at Los Angeles, to Lázaro Cárdenas, May 14, 1936, Expediente 534.1-211, LC, AGN.

UCLA student was "quiet" and "shy," but fought well in the boxing ring. He earned good grades and the respect of everyone who knew him. Mr. Dooley was impressed with the young bruin's work ethic and future aspirations. He noted that Sánchez worked while he was in high school and continued to hold a job. Sánchez's "mission in life," he wrote, was to contribute to the greater good.

Regardless of students' places of birth, they all attended primary or secondary school in the United States. Aware that officials in Mexico might perceive Mexican students as Americans, letter writers identified these students with "Mexicanness" and defined them as Mexican citizens. When expressing his desire to become a mechanical engineer, Joaquín Gallardo referred to Mexico as "mi patria."[34] Juan Hidalgo was "raised outside his patria" for a total of thirteen years and "knew little Spanish," but assured the Mexican president that he "was Mexican." "In me is found," he continued, "a sublime inspiration that has taken control since my early years. This inspiration has given me enough strength to complete my American studies..."[35] For Juan and Joaquín, belonging to the Mexican nation was based on sentiment instead of residency or even language proficiency. In numerous letters, students born in the U.S. affirmed their Mexican identity and connection to Mexico. Luis P. Castro, the Mexican consul at Phoenix, captured their transnational formulation of citizenship. "Even though he was born in the United States," wrote the consul, José Ibarra "has great and sincere warmth for Mexico, where his parents came from." José, in the words of this Mexican official, was "A Mexican citizen born in Arizona."[36] This transnational formulation, espoused by a representative of the Mexican state, is particularly significant. Focusing on migrants and "Mexican Americans," Ramón Saldívar and Alicia Schmidt Camacho argue that Mexicans in

[34] I have translated "ingeniero mecánico electrico," as mechanical engineer. Juan Hidalgo to Lázaro Cárdenas, November 17, 1935, Expediente 534.1-354, LC, AGN.
[35] Juan Hidalgo to Lázaro Cárdenas, November 17, 1935, Expediente 534.1-354, LC, AGN.
[36] Consul Luis P. Castro to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, June 30, 1931, Expediente IV-670-10, SRE.

the United States expressed a sense of belonging that challenged both U.S. and Mexican notions of citizenship.[37] The consul's phrase was not just a reflection of migrants' ideas, but captured migrant children's position *vis-vis* the U.S. and Mexican state. Neither the United States nor Mexico granted dual citizenship, yet they were granted U.S. citizenship through birthright. In addition, the Mexican constitution granted citizenship to the children of Mexican nationals. Here, the consul acknowledged both, while emphasizing the young Mexicans connection to Mexico.

In their letters, migrant parents emphasized their previous contributions to the Mexican nation as well as the ostensible future labor of their children. Like veterans of the Mexican revolution based in Mexico, Gustavo L. Schroeder and Francisco Gamboa tried to use their armed participation in the revolution to gain material benefits. During the 1920s, state policy excluded Zapatistas, Villistas, and Felicistas from military pensions. By 1939, the Mexican state adopted a more inclusive definition of revolutionary veteran.[38] Both veterans approached the state during this new opening.

In 1940, Gustavo L. Schroeder inquired with the Mexican consul at Eagle Pass, Francisco Polin Tapia, about obtaining a scholarship for his son Carlos to study at the "Escuela Naval de Veracruz" (Naval Collect in Veracruz).[39] "[I] agreed to the desires of the compatriot in reference," the consul wrote to SRE, "because it was in regards to a Mexican who was a member of the national army until 1914, holding the rank of captain." In addition to his revolutionary credentials, Mr. Schroeder had cooperated with the consul in various ways and "always distinguished himself

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[37] Alicia Schmidt Camacho, *Migrant Imaginaries: Latino Cultural Politics in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York: NYU Press, 2008); Ramón Saldívar, *Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006). Lisa Lowe make a similar claim for Asian Americans. She argues that Asian American cultural practices "marks alternatives to the national terrain by occupying other spaces, imagining different narratives and critical historiographies." *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996).
[38] Rath, *Myths of Demilitarization.*
[39] Francisco Polin Tapia to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, July 29, 1940, Expediente III-2385-19, SRE.

through his healthy nationalism."[40] Instead of visiting one of Mexico's consular offices, Francisco Gamboa wrote directly to President Manuel Avila Camacho. "I fought…in the Revolution, obtaining the rank of second captain, under the orders of General Benecio López Padilla," he boasted. Gamboa acknowledged his residency in the United States, but assured the Mexican president that he wanted his son to know "history and everything related to his nation."[41] Instead of financial support, the veteran of the Mexican revolution wanted a letter of recommendation to facilitate his son's entrance to a school in Monterrey.[42]

Writing as both as a mother and a former educator, Luz M de Esparza of Santa Barbara, California, used education to link her past to the future of both her children and the Mexican nation. "You," she wrote to President Cárdenas in 1939, "love the nation and its youth, the children. They are, depending on how you educate them, the bright future of tomorrow." In 1914, before migrating and becoming a mother, she worked with her relatives as an assistant in an elementary school. Because authorities neglected the school, the staff relied on parents' contributions for their entire income: a common experience for many educators during the Mexican revolution. Her labor, she wrote to President Cárdenas, was sustained by a sense of "duty to our nation." Nationalism, however, was not enough. By 1939, she resided in the United States and was a mother of seven U.S. citizens. Their future, very much like that of her previous students and youth of Mexico, was framed within the Mexican nation. Referring to them as her "only capital," she wanted to give them to her "beloved nation."[43]

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[40] The exact position was capitán 1ro, which I have translated to captain. Francisco Polin Tapia to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, July 29, 1940, Expediente III-2385-19, SRE.
[41] Francisco Gamboa to Manuel Avila Camacho, August 5, 1945, Expediente 534.1-1564, Ramo Presidentes, Manuel Avila Camacho. Archivo General de la Nación, México, D.F. (Hereafter, MAC, AGN)
[42] Francisco Gamboa to Manuel Avila Camacho, August 5, 1945, Expediente 534.1-1564, MAC, AGN.
[43] Luz M de Esparza to Lazaro Cárdenas, August 15, 1939. Expediente 534.1-1003, LC, AGN.

Mexicans abroad aligned students' futures with that of the nation. In doing so, they echoed the state's own vision for university students. The "dream of one day being of service to my patria," for example, helped Juan Hidalgo through his studies.[44] The López brothers, who aspired to study medicine, Antonio Padilla from Chicago, and Alicia Asúnsolo from Los Angeles, wanted to be "useful citizen[s] to la patria."[45] In many instances, letter writers defined the manner in which they would be "useful." For example, after completing his studies, David Jenaro Troncoso, "would lend his services to our nation."[46] If the Mexican government aided Carlos López in becoming a veterinarian, he would give his labor to the Mexican nation.[47] The numerous promises from parents and students assured the SRE, the SEP, and other officials, that their investment in Mexicans in the United States would benefit their nation.

Despite students' personal achievements, their nationalist sentiment, and desire to contribute to the future of the Mexican nation, they received unfavorable responses. While some waited for an answer that never arrived, others received a short reply.[48] "The President of the Republic," Juan Hidalgo was informed, "laments not being able to answer your request."[49] The numerous correspondences from state representatives indicate that there were two major obstacles. First, there was no clear procedure established to award scholarships to Mexicans in the United States. The case of Vicente García López provides a good example. In May of 1940 he wrote to Rodolfo Salazar, the Mexican consul in Los Angeles. Salazar forwarded this request to the SRE, who then wrote to the President of UNAM in Mexico, Dr. Gustavo Baz, and to the Secretaría de

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[44] Juan Hidalgo to Lazaro Cárdenas, November 17, 1935, Expediente 534.1-354, LC, AGN.
[45] Rodolfo Salazar to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, May 27, 1940, Expediente III-2385-19 and Antonio Padilla to Secretario de Educación Pública. No date. Expediente IV-670-6, SRE; F.B. Asúnsolo to Manuel Avila Camacho, January 1, 1941, Expediente 534.1-121, LC, AGN.
[46] Rodolfo Salazar to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, June 15, 1942, Expediente III-2385-19, SRE.
[47] Consul H. Valdés to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, July 6, 1931. Expediente IV-670-9, SRE.
[48] Paz. I. Vda Palacios to Manuel Avila Camacho, January 25 1941. Expediente 702.2-1606, MAC, AGN.
[49] José Hernández Delgado to Juan Hidalgo. December 7, 1935. Expediente 534.1-354. LC, AGN.

la Defensa Nacional (Secretary of National Defense, hereafter SEDENA). The President notified the SRE that he was not in charge of those scholarships. A bureaucrat at the SEDENA clarified that the Colegio Militar (Military College) and the Escuela Médico Militar (Medical Military College) were two distinct institutions. This point, however, was insignificant since the Escuela Médico Militar started on January 1 and "it would not be possible to accept the student."[50] The second, and much larger problem, was the lack of financial resources. Writing for the SEP in 1931, Salvador López de Ortigosa lamented that the department found itself unable to allocate any funds for this purpose.[51] Nine years later, the Comité de la Revolución Mexicana (Committee of the Mexican Revolution) wrote on behalf of one of its members. A government official provided this migrants organization with similar news."[52] While the reasons for denying requests varied, there was little variation in the outcome: the state did not fulfill any individual requests.

While individual requests were denied, Mexicans' visits to consul and their letters to government officials helped create a portrait of migrant desires and needs, which became the basis for institutional change. Not surprisingly, the Mexican consuls in San Francisco and Los Angeles emerged as both intermediaries and champions of educational rights for Mexicans born in the United States. It was through their efforts that the Mexican state finally created educational opportunities for children of migrants. The consul's role represented the possibilities, but also the limits of migrant agency and transnational citizenship.

In February 1939, the Consul General of Mexico in San Francisco Héctor M. Escalona wrote and asked the SRE to place a special project before President Cárdenas. Escalona wanted Cárdenas to establish scholarships for young adults at the various military colleges. According to

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[50] Lorenzo Muñoz Merino to Secretario de Estado y del despacho de Relaciones Exteriors, June 20, 1940, Expediente III-2385-19, SRE.
[51] Salvador López de Ortigosa to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, May 26, 1931, Expediente IV-670-14, SRE.
[52] Arnulfo Pérez to Carlos García, July 9, 1940, Expediente 534.1-211, LC, AGN.

the Mexican consul general at San Francisco, this would benefit the individuals selected and the publicity would serve to connect the "Mexican colonies" in the United States to the Mexican nation and thus "keep alive [the] love for nation and interest in our institutions."[53]

Military colleges were a logical home for working-class Mexicans from the United States. Military educational institutions expanded in the 1920s and 1930s, they sought to create social mobility for working-class families, and they were connected to the state. Founded in 1869, the Colegio Militar gained a prominent place within the military after the Mexican revolution. As with other educational institutions, the military experienced a proliferation of schools and an effort to standardize curriculum and teaching. In 1917, the Escuela Constitucionalista Médico Militar was founded, followed by the Escuela Militar de Transmisiones in 1925. In the early 1930s, the Escuela Superior de Guerra was created to prepare junior officers for staff and command positions, while the Dirección General de Educación Militar was charged with coordinating all the teaching.[54] For the decade of Mexicans born in the first decade of the twentieth century both attending and teaching at military colleges became a central component of their military career.[55] The Cárdenas administration contributed to this trend and, most importantly, sought to inculcate a "new version of revolutionary citizenship on the military, one based on class identity and revolutionary engagement."[56] Soldiers' solidarity with the working-class was very much based on their own place within it. Through the "Day of the Soldier" celebrations, the state emphasized soldiers' respectability and dignity in hopes of changing the public's negative perceptions of them. By

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53 Héctor M. Escalona to Secretario Relaciones Exteriores, February 15, 1939, Expediente III-2385-19 and Expediente IV-670-14, SRE.
54 Larroyo, *Historia Comparada*.
55 Roderic A. Camp, *Mexico's Military on the Democratic Stage* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Security International, 2005).
56 Rath, *Myths of Demilitarization,* 34.

creating schools for children of soldiers, Cárdenas hoped to provide avenues of upward mobility for working-class children.

While the Cárdenas administration did not create scholarships for U.S.-born Mexicans at military colleges, it selected an institution that also targeted working-class students and was tied to national development and nationalist sentiment: the Instituto Técnico Industrial de Tijuana. Founded in 1937, this new technical institute was a product of Cárdenas expropriation as well the growth and development of a system of technical education across Mexico. The Cárdenas government, according to Allan Knight, was a top-down, "genuinely radical movement," that required popular support to accomplish a range of unprecedented initiatives that included agrarian reform, expropriation of lands and foreign businesses, and the nationalization of the oil industry.[57] Among the private enterprises seized for the Mexican nation was the Agua Caliente Casino and Spa in Tijuana, the location of the new technical institution and future home of twenty Mexicans from Southern California.

To understand the symbolic importance of President Cárdenas' expropriation we need to trace the history of this casino. Founded in the late 1920s, Agua Caliente was part of an emerging "border tourism industry" that was born out of proximity to the border, the rise of the automobile, and prohibition."[58] Just on the other side of San Diego, it housed a casino, racetrack, and hotel-spa and attracted mobsters, Hollywood and sports celebrities, diplomats, royalty, and, of course, the

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[57] Allan Knight, "Cardenismo: Juggernaut or Jalopy?" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol 26, 1 (1999). The Mexican historian Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso argues that despite President Cárdenas' populist rhetoric, his policies towards Mexican repatriates were minimal and based on practices developed in the early twentieth century. Cárdenas did not make repatriation a priority or include returning Mexicans in agrarian reform. Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso, *Que se Queden Allá: El gobierno de México y la repatriación de mexicanos en Estados Unidos (1934-1940)* (Tijuana: El Colegio de la Frontera Norte/El Colegio de San Luis, 2007).

[58] Eric M. Schantz, "Behind the Noir Border: Tourism, the Vice Racket, and Power Relations in Baja California's Border Zone, 1938-65," in *Holliday in Mexico.* eds., Dina Berger and Andrew Grant Wood, (Duke University Press, 2009).

popular classes. Its most dedicated historian, Paul J. Vanderwood, compared this Tijuana gem to both the Monte Carlo and the Deauville in France.[59]

Trouble loomed for gambling, however, and for Agua Caliente in particular, from the outset of Cárdenas' presidency. While he aimed to rid the masses of vice, superstition, and corruption, his effort at "moral regeneration" in Tijuana was coupled with a practical and political consideration. Tijuana's gaming industry was a major economic resource for Plutarco Elías Calles and Abelardo L. Rodríguez, Cárdenas' political rivals.[60] Within one month of his inaugural address, he ordered all the country's casinos, except those in Baja California Norte, to close. Seven months later, on July 20, 1935, Agua Caliente was forced to shut its doors.[61] The process was slow and it was not until December 18, 1937, that all, except the racetrack, was expropriated in the name of the Instituto Técnico Industrial de Tijuana. The local writer Conrado Acevedo Cárdenas described the effort to turn this house of gambling into a university. It is worth quoting him at length:

> The elegant building of the luxurious hotel was transformed into general dorms for the students, the spacious garage of the casino into tinware, carpentry, mechanical and electrical fitting workrooms; the luxurious gambling hall was designated as a student recreation center; the comfortable bungalows, which were constructed to serve the administrative council were made into temporary accommodations for professors; the incomparable baths, as well as the refectory and the modern laundry room continued fulfilling their functions; the old fields of the greyhound race track were transformed into athletic fields and there was only the need to construct a dozen modern classrooms to make the improbable into a beautiful reality.[62]

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[59] Paul J. Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground: Mobsters and Movie Stars at America's Greatest Gaming Resort* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010)
[60] Schantz, "Behind the Noir Border"
[61] Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground*.
[62] Conrado Acevedo Cárdenas, *Tijuana, ensayo monográfico* (México: Stylo, 1955). Quoted in Max Calvillo Velasco, "El Instituto Técnico Industrial de Agua Caliente."

As part of Cárdenas' expropriation and SEP's efforts to unify and expand the nation's technical schools, the new institute in Tijuana reflected nationalist sentiment and national policy. It opened in October 1939 and welcomed a class of about eight hundred students.[63] Just one month after its official opening, the new educational institute reached across the U.S.-Mexico border to provide educational opportunities for children of migrants based in Southern California. The words "Scholarships for Mexicans Residing in the United States" ran across page two of *La Opinion*'s December 4th issue.[64] Quoting the entirety of a government bulletin, the Spanish language paper announced that the "revolutionary administration" converted the Casino de Agua Caliente in Tijuana into the Instituto Técnico Industrial and that the SEP offered twenty scholarships for Mexicans residing within the jurisdiction of the Los Angeles consul, which included much of Southern California. Eleven slots were allocated for youth who resided in Los Angeles County, the remaining nine were divided equally between Mexican students in Ventura, Orange, and Santa Barbara County.

The state provided migrant parents and Mexican students interested in these scholarships with a clear set of requirements and due date and thus removed the bureaucratic maze experienced by individual solicitations. As with the founding of schools, the consul used the popular and accessible newspaper *La Opinion* to announce the scholarships and to instruct migrant families. Students interested in the scholarships were asked to visit or write to the Los Angeles consul and present the following documents: a certificate attesting to the grade level completed (either eighth grade or "post-primary"); proof of their parents' Mexican nationality; birth certificate; a document attesting to their economic condition and good health; and three passport size photographs. The

63 Vanderwood, *Satan's Playground*.
64 "Becas Para Mexicanos Residentes en E.U.," *La Opinion*, December 24, 1939; Edmundo González to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, January 8, 1940, Expediente III-2396-16, SRE.

grade requirement and the educational structure of technical schools suggest that the scholarships included a range of educational levels. In addition to "prevocational" and "vocational," the school and scholarship included primary school for children between the ages of eleven and seventeen.[65] In short, the Instituto Técnico Industrial was equipped to embrace the spectrum of migrant childrens' educational attainment. Moreover, the selection committee, according to *La Opinion*, would give preference to students whose parents lacked financial resources to fund their studies and to those who were in a position to best take advantage of the opportunity. Based on the available evidence, at least seventeen of the twenty scholarships were granted.[66]

Writing for *La Opinion*, José Garduño echoed the nationalist language found in the countless letters of young students, migrant parents, and government officials. "The recipients," he wrote, "will undeniably have the best opportunity in their life, not only to drink in our educational fountains, but they can feel proud of returning to their patria, which offers to embrace them anew in its bosom, so they can feel like an integral part of her." The current economic crisis, according to the writer, made this investment that much more meaningful. "It should be for them, as much as for their families, a point of pride the fact that despite the difficult economic situation, our nation wants to sacrifice for its children, for the benefit of their families, and their patria."[67] The luxurious university and its connection to Cárdenas added another level of pride for Mexicans living outside the nation's borders.

The embrace of "young Mexicans born in the United States" sparked excitement among migrants throughout Southern California. Just a few days after a local paper published a story

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65 "Prevocational" incorporated youth between thirteen and eighteen years of age. "Becas Para Mexicanos Residentes en E.U.," *La Opinion*, December 24, 1939.

66 Consul Rodolfo Salazar communicated the desires of two migrant mothers to the director of the Instituto Técnico Industrial. Victoria Flores and Isaura D. Chavéz, both of San Pedro, California, inquired about the remaining two to three vacancies for their sons, Roberto and Margarito, seventeen and sixteen-years-old, respectively. See Rodolfo Salazar to Director del Instituto Técnico Industrial, January 16, 1940, Expediente III-2396-16, SRE.

67 Jose Garduño, "Digo Yo," *La Opinion*, December 24, 1939.

about these scholarships, Mexicans residing in San Bernardino county, sixty miles east of downtown Los Angeles, approached Consul Edmundo González and asked him to petition the government for "four or five" scholarships.[68] "This secretary," wrote Anselmo Mena, head of the SRE, "looks favorably upon any actions that you determine necessary to acquire the scholarships that you refer to in your note…"[69] No immediate action emerged from this letter, but it did signal to the SRE, and likely the Los Angeles consul, that scholarship programs should include youth residing in the San Bernardino area.

In 1943, four years after the creation of twenty scholarships, Mexicans in Los Angeles visited their consul general Vicente Peralta and expressed their desire to continue their studies in Mexico.[70] Peralta wrote to Ezequiel Padilla of SRE, who in turn wrote to the SEP, the Secretaria de Marina (Secretary of Navy, hereafter SEMAR) Secretaria de Agricultural y Fomento (Secretary of Agriculture and Development, hereafter SAF), and SEDENA.[71] Returning to Mexico, Padilla argued, would strengthen spiritual ties between "us" and the students. This, he reasoned, made it logical to create as "as many scholarships as possible in our educational institutions." "I ask," he wrote, "that you consider the possibility of creating them."[72] The SEMAR and SAF responded enthusiastically. The former promised to create scholarships on a large scale "for those born and raised in the United States and throughout America," while Marte R. Gómez of the SAF happily

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68 Edmundo González to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, January 8, 1940, Expediente III-2396-16, SRE.
69 Anselmo Mena to Edmundo González, January 15, 1940, Expediente III-2396-16, SRE.
70 Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de Educación Pública, Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de Marina, Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de Agricultura y Fomento, Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de la Defensa Nacional, December 14, 1943, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
71 Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de Educación Pública, Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de Marina, Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de Agricultura y Fomento, Ezequiel Padilla to Secretario de la Defensa Nacional, December 14, 1943, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
72 In the letter to the SEP, Padilla asked for scholarships at La Escuela Normal and the Instituto Politécnico.

offered to create five.[73] Based on the archival record, only the SAF's modest proposal moved forward.

Mexicans born in the United States were invited to attend the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura de Chapingo (National Agricultural School at Chapingo) and become agricultural engineers.[74] The development of agronomy, like the field of anthropology, was closely linked to the formation of the post-revolutionary state.[75] Echoing Mary Kay Vaughn's study of rural education, Joseph Cotter demonstrates "how a small, unorganized group of upper-and middle-class university graduates forged an alliance with the state…to transform themselves into scientific researchers who rose to international prominence as a result of the Green Revolution."[76] While agrónomos looked down upon *campesinos*, held Porfirian attitudes towards them, and sought to sustain and create hierarchal relationships, they positioned themselves as their champions. In the process they placed their profession in "a heroic role in the Revolution, validating their membership in the Revolutionary Family."[77] They were integral to various state efforts to transform the countryside. They were part of SEP's Cultural Missions in the 1920s, agrarianism and *cardenismo* in the 1930s, and bi-national collaboration between the United States and Mexico during World War II. In fact, the Avila Camacho administration (1940 to 1946) appointed agrónomo Marte R. Gómez to direct the SAF. It was under Gómez's tenure that the agency created five scholarships for Mexican youth.

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[73] General Heriberto Jara to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, December 17, 1943 and Marte R. Gómez to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, December 30, 1943, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
[74] Marte R. Gómez to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, December 30, 1943 and Edmundo González to comisiones honoricicas mexicanas, January 26, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
[75] For nation-state building and anthropology see Claudio Lomnitz, *Deep Mexico, Silent Mexico: An Anthropology of Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).
[76] Joseph Cotter, *Troubled Harvest: Agronomy and Revolution in Mexico*, 1880-2002 (Westport, Connecticut, London: Praeger, 2003), xiii.
[77] Ibid. 54.

Two of the five scholarships were allocated for Mexicans within the jurisdiction of San Bernardino. Inclusive of school fees, food, clothing, and housing, it covered all the basic needs. Students were required to finish high school and demonstrated good conduct.[78] In addition to submitting all the proper documentation, students needed to take an entrance exam in Mexico on January 5, 10, or 15.[79] Here was one major problem. Marte R. Gómez notified the SRE about the available scholarships on December 30 1943, just sixteen days before the date of the last scheduled entrance exam. This was not lost on the SRE and its officials acted quickly and wrote to both the Los Angeles consul and the SAF. Pablo Campos Ortíz, the "director general" of the SRE, informed the consul general of Los Angeles of the good news, attached the questions for the exam, necessary requirements and documents, and instructed him to offer the scholarships.[80] That same day, Manuel Tello of the SRE wrote to the SAF and asked if the entrance exam could be postponed.[81] Writing on the January 20 for the SAF, an official granted the extension and pushed back the exam date to February 10, but noted that earlier was better. After this date, he cautioned, the students would have to wait until the following year to enter the school at Chapingo.[82] Worried that migrant children were not completely proficient in Spanish and lacked knowledge of Mexican history and geography, the Los Angeles consul asked the SRE to postpone the exam for six months. The consul noted that this was common practice for Mexican students who attended universities in the United States.[83] Marte R. Gómez granted the extension.[84]

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78 Edmundo González to comisiones honoricicas mexicanas, January 26, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
79 Marte R. Gómez to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, December 30, 1943, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
80 The document is dated 1943, but this is likely a mistake. Pablo Campos Ortíz to Los Angeles Consul General, January 6, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
81 The document is dated 1943, but this is likely a mistake. Manuel Tello to Secretario de Agricultura y Fomento, January 6, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
82 Alfonso González Gallardo to Oficial Mayor de Relaciones Exteriores, January 20, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
83 See Telegrama to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, January 21, 1944 and Vicente Santos Guajardo to Secretario de Agricultura y Fomento, February 2, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
84 Marte R. Gómez to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, February 16, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.

Despite the interest expressed by Mexican students throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, only two young men presented themselves to the Los Angeles consul. Vicente Peralta, of the Los Angeles consul, enthusiastically, although generically, introduced Luis Humberto Cota and Ricardo Cordero Jauregui to the director of the Escuela Nacional de Agricultura. Luis had already graduated from high school and even studied engineering for one year. He was born in Mazatlán, Sinaloa, but had resided in the United States since he was four years old.[85] Ricardo Cordero Jauregui was in his last semester of high school and unlike Luis was born in Los Angeles. Both were excellent students at the top of their classes. Ricardo, the consul informed the director of Escuela Nacional de Agricultura, was on his way to Mexico and would present his documents in person.[86] He arrived on February 9, one day before the entrance exam. Unfortunately for Ricardo, there was some administrative confusion among the various Mexican institutions. Since the scholarships were granted through an agreement between the SRE and the SAF, Ricardo needed to present himself to those departments and not directly to the school.[87] Ricardo, it turns out, went directly to the university.

The consul of San Bernardino used the press, the radio, and even the local honorary commissions to spread the word about the scholarships, but was unable to find a single student. The majority of Mexicans born in the United States, the consul of Los Angeles and San Bernardino claimed, had already enlisted in the United States' armed services.[88] Through an agreement between the U.S. and Mexican governments, signed on January 22, 1943, the United States granted citizenship to Mexican nationals who served in the armed forces. Thus, the war effort included and

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85 Vicente Peralta C. to Director Escuela Nacional de Agricultura, Chapingo, D.F. February 1, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
86 Consul General Vicente Peralta C. to Director, Escuela Nacional de Agricultura, Chapingo, D.F. February 1, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
87 Pablo Campos Ortiz to consul general, Los Angeles, February 9, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.
88 Vicente Peralta C. to consul at San Bernardino, February 9, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE.

enticed those born in the U.S. and in Mexico. According to Emilio Zamora, Mexican nationals from Texas who fought were "more socially and culturally similar to U.S.-born Mexicans" and likely motivated by the possibility of gaining U.S. citizenship.[89] Working with a sample of surveys conducted by the Mexican government, he found that the majority (58.8 percent) migrated between 1916 and 1926 and arrived to the United States as young children (the average age was 3.9). In addition to citizenship, World War II provided "Mexican Americans" recognition and inclusion, albeit imperfectly, as well as the promise of social mobility.

Instead of joining the armed services, Luis and Ricardo enlisted the help of the Mexican state to continue their education. They were not alone. In the summer of 1944, Consul Vicente Peralta recommended José Eulogio Ruiz, a seventeen-year-old resident who had finished eighth grade, to the director of the Instituto Técnico Industrial.[90] The son of Francisco Gamboa, the veteran of the Mexican revolution discussed earlier, provides an additional example. These five Mexicans add an important transnational dimension to the narrative of "Mexican American" soldering. World War II might have diminished the interest in scholarships among Mexicans in the United States, but at the young men mentioned above looked to the Mexican state to create alternative paths for social mobility and national belonging.

World War II was not the only factor that impacted the number of applicants for the SAF's scholarship. The underrepresentation of Mexicans in U.S. high schools meant that requiring a high school diploma automatically limited the pool of qualified applicants. In addition, enthusiasm and collaboration were a poor substitute for good planning. Even though the SAF allowed students to

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[89] Emilio Zamora, "Mexican Nationals in the U.S. Military: Diplomacy and Battlefield Sacrifice," in *Beyond The Latino World War II Hero: The Social and Political Legacy of a Generation,* eds., Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez and Emilio Zamora (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 99.

[90] Vicente Peralta C. to Jesus Padilla Avila, Director del Instituto Técnico Industrial, August 25, 1944, Expediente III-2396-16, SRE.

take the entrance exam six months after their initial enrollment, there was very little time between the announcement of the scholarships and the start of courses, February 22, 1944. The latter coincided with the middle of the school year for U.S. high school students, which meant that students either had to leave while they were in the middle of their senior year, like Ricardo, or have completed their studies, as was the case with Luis. In the end, the SAF offered to postpone the scholarships until the following year in order to allow enough time to "designate the candidates, their inscription, travel to Mexico, etc."[91]

Conclusion

From 1930 to 1945, more than twenty-four Mexicans in the United States asked the state for scholarships or financial assistance. Through their letters, parents and students defined Mexicans born in the U.S. as Mexican citizens who were willing to use their expertise to contribute to the Mexican nation. Despite the enthusiasm from a range of actors, including representatives of the Mexican state, migrant parents and students were consistently disappointed. Their words, however, did articulate the needs and desires of migrant families and closely echoed the post-revolutionary state' discourse about the university. With help from Mexican consuls, their efforts resulted in the creation of twenty-five scholarships. Moreover, these two educational opportunities intersected with major educational and political developments within Mexico. The scholarships at the Instituto Técnico Industrial were a product of Cárdenas's expropriation and the development of the Instituto Politécnico Nacional. The Escuela Nacional de Agricultura, Chapingo was also a product of national developments. In this case, the professionalization of agricultural engineers and this profession's alignment with the state.

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[91] Marte R. Gómez to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, February 16, 1944, Expediente III-2471-5, SRE. This message was relayed to the consul general, Los Angeles,

The twenty-five scholarships reveal a form of transnational citizenship among the "Mexican American generation" and provide a new lens to examine migrant-state relations, particularly as it related to the role of Mexican consuls. From the United States, Mexicans were able to insert themselves into Mexico's educational system. Consuls were central to this process and functioned as intermediaries between migrant communities and the state. However, there were limits to migrant agency and transnational citizenship. Functioning as intermediaries, it was the consuls that created the scholarships and selected the students. Moreover, the process was haphazard, ad-hoc, and did not result in long-term institutional changes. In addition, migrants' transnational imaginations were shaped by their gender practices and roles, which privileged the travel of young men and the domesticity of young women. This explains the overwhelming number of male students in the pool of requests. Despite these limits, the scholarships provided an avenue for social mobility and educational achievement for a generation that was segregated in primary schools and underrepresented on high school and university campuses. The scholarships, moreover, signal "an unexplored tradition" of "Mexican American" educational attainment. One, which was only possible as a result of the growth of Mexican universities and migrants' demands and desires.[92]

[92] According to Guadalupe San Miguel Jr. and Richard R. Valencia, scholars of education know very little about the "Mexican Americans" who attended college during the early-to-mid twentieth century. See "From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo."

Part Two

Migrant Families Navigate the Great Depression

In 1971, a young Mexican American undergraduate at California State University, Fullerton conducted oral histories with Mexicans who experienced repatriation as well as with white Americans who played a role in the repatriation process. As a descendant of repatriates and a student during the Civil Rights Movement, Christina Valenciana wanted to understand if repatriates were forcefully removed. If, in short, repatriates were deportees. It was with this guiding question that Valenciana set out to document this important—and at the time—under researched moment in U.S. history.

While Valenciana used a national and civil rights framework to guide her interviews with repatriates, they remain an indispensable source for the study of Mexicans and the Great Depression. As part of the Mexican American Oral History Project, housed at California State University, Fullerton, this collection of oral histories documents repatriates' time in the United States, their decision to return, the process of returning, their efforts to navigate and live in Mexico, and their efforts to return to the United States. In short, they provide us with personal accounts of returning to Mexico, arriving and living in Mexico, and coming back to the United States. The following three chapters combine these personal stories with sources from archives in Mexico and the United States to write a transnational history of repatriation and of transnational citizenship.

Chapter Three uses sources from Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Relations to examine the relationship between the Mexican state and repatriates. More to the point, it argues that Mexican consuls provided citizens with documents to facilitate their return to Mexico and their potential re-entry into the United States. Chapter Four argues that families provided repatriates with advice and tools to navigate the Great Depression. In Mexico, for example, relatives often housed

repatriates. Families also split up and operated transnationally in order to weight their options. Chapter Five narrates the efforts of U.S.-born youth to return to the United States. It shows how repatriates visited U.S. consuls and wrote to U.S presidents in an effort to secure the appropriate documents and financial resources to return to the United States. They had mixed results.

Chapter 3

Paper Trails: Migrant desires and agency during the Great Depression

The economic crisis commonly referred to as the Great Depression began in October 1929 with the crash of the stock market and lasted until 1939. The United States witnessed unprecedented unemployment, economic insecurity, and social hardship. In response to this crisis, Franklin Roosevelt's administration created a range of social welfare programs and employment opportunities. Known as the New Deal, these programs were intended to curtail unemployment, boost the economy, and ameliorate suffering associated with the depression.[1] Mexican migrant families experienced all the negative effects of the Great Depression, but did not benefit from the government's new role in society.[2] As many scholars have argued, the actions of state agencies and local county and charity organizations reveal Mexicans' liminal place within the United States. While legally white, Mexicans were viewed as culturally inferior and as a result of the Immigration Act of 1924 associated with illegality. According to Camille Guérin-Gonzales, it was this racial ideology along with the discourse of Mexican migrants as sojourners that justified repatriation campaigns.[3]

U.S. officials and local agencies sought to implemented three strategies to remove Mexicans from the United States. First, local charity organizations worked to provide Mexican migrants and families with free passage or reduced train fare to the U.S.-Mexico border. In Los

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1 For a review of the literature on President Roosevelt and the New Deal see Robert T. Wesser, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Historians: Post-Revisionism" *New York History*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (1991); Alonzo L. Hamby, "The New Deal: Avenues for Reconsideration" *Polity,* Vol. 31, No. 4 (1999). For recent scholarship on the new deal, see Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). For a critical and insightful review of Jefferson Cowie's idea of "the great exception," as expressed in a 2008 article with Nick Salvatore, see Nancy McLean, "Getting New Deal History Wrong," *International Labor and Working-Class History* No. 74 (2008).

2 Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005).

3 Camille Guérin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

Angeles, those who received free passage were given departure cards that indicated they had received "charity," making it harder under U.S. immigration laws for them to return to the United States at a future date. In Los Angeles, 12,668 Mexicans returned to Mexico by the end of 1933, with the Bureau of County Welfare paying $182,575.[4] Second, this voluntary, but underhanded process of return was accompanied by the deportation of migrants. From June 1930 to June 1931, the federal government removed approximately 30,000 undocumented migrants, the majority of which were Mexicans.[5] Lastly, while short lived, officials created a climate of fear by publishing articles about future deportations and executing immigration raids in El Monte and at the Placita Olvera in Los Angeles in February 1931. Collectively, these actions reflected a desire by U.S. officials and local agencies to remove Mexicans from the United States. Scholars disagree about the number of Mexicans that left the United States during the Great Depression, but estimates range from 350,000 to over 1 million.[6]

Book titles such as *Decade of Betrayal* and *Unwanted Mexicans* capture U.S. historians' critical assessment of local as well as national actors and ultimately Mexicans' position in the United States as second class citizens. They also, however, reveal scholars' insistence on using a U.S. civil rights framework to study Mexican repatriation.[7] Camille Guérin-Gonzales' *Mexican Workers and American Dreams* is illustrative of this approach and its limits. Framing her study of

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[4] Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1974).

[5] Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans*.

[6] Scholars who understand all movement back to Mexico in the 1930s as a form of forced removal place the total at 1 million. See Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995). In their 2013 article, Brian Gratton and Emily Merchant argue that only 350,000 returned and that this total included Mexicans who left voluntarily. See "Immigration, Repatriation, and Deportation: The Mexican-Origin Population in the United States, 1920-1950" *International Migration Review* 47, no. 4 (2013).

[7] For a critical view of scholarship on repatriation by U.S. scholars see Benny Jr. Andrés, "Invisible Borders: Repatriation and Colonization of Mexican Migrant workers along the California Borderlands during the 1930s" *California History* Vol. 88 (2011).

repatriation around the "American dream," Guérin-Gonzales claims that it shaped the expectations and behavior of Mexican migrants. "The American dream," she writes, "promised economic opportunity and security—which would free people to realize their intellectual, physical, and spiritual potential—as the foundation for basic rights of individual citizens."[8] While this framework is sensitive to migrants' plight, it tells us very little about migrants' desires, actions, and agency. In these narratives, migrants emerge as passive victims and any form of return—whether its voluntary, coerced, or forced—is understood as a forced expulsion. In addition, U.S. scholars study repatriation within a national framework, downplaying or ignoring any transnational connections or context. Using sources from Mexico's Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Secretary of Foreign Relations, hereafter SRE) this chapter conceptualizes migrants as Mexican citizens.[9] By focusing on the relationship between Mexican migrants and the Mexican government this chapters complicates our narrative of repatriation in two ways. First, it uses migrant letters to Mexican consular officials, to the SRE, and Mexican presidents to situate repatriation from migrants' point of view. Their most common request, which the Mexican state was unable to fulfill, was for transportation to the U.S.-Mexico border. In other words, many migrants desired to return to Mexico. Second, I examine the interaction between Mexican consular officials and Mexican communities to think more critically about the role that documents played during repatriation. As in earlier chapters, I argue that Mexican consuls played a vital role. In the context of repatriation, they created an entire infrastructure to disseminate information and papers.

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8 Camille Guérin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 2.

9 This chapter uses a selection of letters, consular protection files from 1931, and memo's regarding the types of documents issued. In the future, I plan to incorporate consular protection files from 1931 to 1934 (most repatriates returned during this time span) and to use other sources from the SRE to tabulate the number of documents that were issued.

In his study of citizenship, Kamal Sadiq reminds us that all immigrants have documents. [10] Rather than a hurried and unplanned return, I demonstrate that repatriates worked with consuls to carefully and purposefully accumulate a number of documents in preparation for their journey. While some papers functioned to identify migrants as Mexican citizens and exempt them from paying imports on their goods, other documents were clearly intended to help them return to the United States. In short, we should understand the ability to acquire documents to return to Mexico, but also to potentially re-enter the United States, as a form of migrant agency.

Getting to the U.S.-Mexico Border

Writing to consular officials, Mexican presidents, and other representative of the state, migrants requested transportation to their hometowns. Letters were usually composed by the father and on behalf of an entire family. Writing to the SRE, Manuel Carillo described himself as "a son and native born Mexican of my beloved nation." Like many "brothers of the race," Manuel and his family were negatively impacted by the economic crisis. He hoped that the Mexican government would help his family, which included his wife Juanita Mejia de Carillo and their two children.[11] From New Mexico, Manuel Salgado a former resident of San Diego Alcalá wrote to the governor of Chihuahua to request help in returning to "our beloved nation." [12] In other instances, one or a few individuals addressed a representative of the Mexican state on behalf of an entire group. For example, the president, treasure, and secretary of the "Colonia Agricola Pascual Ortíz Rubio," signed the groups letter to president President Ortíz Rubio. This group was composed of 151 members and included twenty-one families. Based in Goodyear, Arizona, thirty

[10] Kamal Sadiq, *Paper Citizens: How Illegal Immigrants Acquire Citizenship in Developing Countries* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[11] Manuel Carillo to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, January 8, 1931, Expediente IV-360-24, Acervo Histórico Diplomático de Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, México D.F. (Hereafter SRE).
[12] Andres Landa y Piña, Secretaria de Gobernacion, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, March 15, 1932, Expediente IV-354-54, SRE.

miles from the consul at Phoenix, they asked the president to grant them lands in the state of Sonora, in the district of Magdalena. [13]

From within Mexico, individuals advocated for their struggling family members by speaking with or writing to government officials. José Orozco's mother visited the SRE in Mexico City in October 1932. She explained to a government official that her son was forced to close his barbershop as a result of the Great Depression. Struggling economically, he desired to return to Mexico.[14] Guadalupe García, another concerned mother, wrote to the Mexican consul in San Diego. Writing from Guadalajara, she hoped that the consul could help Jesús G. González and his family return to Mexico. Esther de la Torre of Mexico City wrote to the Secretaría de Gobernación (Secretary of the Interior, hereafter SEGOB) on behalf of her brother Enrique. Like the two aforementioned mothers, she wanted free passage for her brother's family. It was "impossible," she explained to a government official in her letter, for Enrique to make it to the border to "receive the patriotic protection of our government." She asked the SEGOB if it was possible for the consul at Kansas City to visit her brother at his home on Holly Street and observe his "desperate" situation.[15] Lastly, Francisco Valladeres, a resident of Mexico City, visited the SRE and requested help to repatriate his sister Victoria and her family, which contained nine individuals.[16]

These were not migrants' only advocates in Mexico. Mexicans in the United States asked friends and family members who held political office or were employed by the government to intervene on their behalf. Writing to the SRE from Veracruz, Cárlos J. Ponce made sure to note that he was a "humble servant of the government, a postal employee...for thirty years." "I would

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[13] Colonia Agricola Pascual Ortíz Rubio to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio, January 21, 1931, Expediente IV-360-4, SRE

[14] Consul at Houston, Texas, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, October November 8, 1932, Expediente IV-356-20, SRE.

[15] Silvano B. Gonzalez, official mayor, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, September 21, 1931, Expediente IV-356-21, SRE.

[16] El oficial Mayor to consul at St. Louis, Missouri, November 15, 1931, Expediente IV-360-21, SRE.

like," he continued, "that this humble achievement will help me obtain the grace that I am going to beg of you." His sister María Luisa Ponce, who lived in San Antonio, Texas, lost her job and was unemployed for several months. On a small government salary, he was not enable to pay for her transportation and thus fulfill his familial obligations. He hoped that the government would provide her with free passage to Mexico.[17] Enrique Romero Courtade, the Secretario General de Departamento del Distrito Federal, wrote to the undersecretary of the SRE on behalf of his friend and fellow "paisano" Manuel Gallardo. After opening his letter with a warm and intimate salutation—my esteemed and dear friend—Romero Courtade explained to Fernando Torreblanca that he received a letter from his friend Manuel, who resided in St. Joseph, Missouri. In this letter, Manuel asked Romero for help in securing his family's repatriation, which included his wife and their three children. Romero wrote to the undersecretary of the SEGOB, but was disappointed to learn that that the government could only provide transportation within Mexico's border. The Mexican consul at Kansas, moreover, explained to Gallardo that Mexicans could only be transported from the border to their hometown with the approval of the SRE. It was within this context that Enrique Courtade asked his "dear friend" if he could instruct the consul at Kansas to provide the Gallardo family with transportation to the U.S.-Mexico border.[18]

Letter writers validated their requests by positioning their subjects as victims of the economic crisis and emphasizing their connection to and future contributions to the Mexican nation. Writing for a group of forty-five families based in Arizona, Guillermo Melendez noted that a "the majority of Mexicans who reside here are without work." They were so limited in funds that they could not afford to "take one step." Like others, they wanted the government to help them

[17] Cárlos Ponce to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, August 13, 1932, Expediente IV-360-32, SRE.
[18] Enrique Romero Courtade, Secretario General de Departamento del Distrito Federal, to Fernando Torreblanca, Subsecreatario de Relaciones Exteriors, March 7, 1932, Expediente IV-360-56, SRE.

return to their county.[19] In Denver, Manuel Salgado explained to the governor of Chihuahua that he was unable to secure even one day of work or feed his wife. Writing to this Mexican official was a "last resort," one taken to "remedy the state in which he finds himself."[20] In a letter to the SRE, Felipe Sánchez claimed that he had not worked in an entire year and that his family was "…suffering the most terrible needs."[21] Raymundo Gutiérrez explained to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio that his savings, which he accumulated through three years of arduous work and privations, were gone. He was unable to afford the birth of his third child and was forced to take his wife to the county hospital. In his letter, Gutiérrez claimed the the president was the "only hope that I see from the depth of despair in which I find myself, my wife, and three children."[22]

These narratives confirmed the state's patriarchal understanding of gender relations and more specifically fathers' role as breadwinners. The absence of a male figure, whether it was a father or older brother, was especially troubling within this value system. Aware of these ideals, Emilia Guzmán appealed to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio as a parent and father of the nation. "I do not have the pleasure of knowing you, but I have heard from many people about your kindness" she wrote to the president in May 1931. It was his "kindness" that gave Emilia the courage to write. She explained that she migrated to the United States with her mother in 1929. They arrived and resided in Mesa, Arizona with her brother. It was here—just six days prior to penning a letter to the president—that her mother passed away. Emilia's brother left Mesa to find work and had not returned. "I don't have anything to eat," she wrote to the Mexican president. While she looked for work "everywhere," she was unable to gain employment because she did not know English. With

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[19] Guillermo Melendez to "Muy estimado Sr.," no date, Expediente IV-364-51, Guillermo Melendez to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, March 18, 1931, Expediente IV-364-51, SRE.
[20] Andres Landa y Piña, Secretaria de Gobernacion, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, March 15, 1932, Expediente IV-354-54, SRE.
[21] Felipe Sánchez to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, June 25, 1931, Expediente IV-356-6, SRE.
[22] Raymundo Gutiérrez to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio, January 5, 1931, Expediente IV-356-37, SRE.

few friends she found herself "alone." "I do not want to die in a foreign land," she wrote. It was in under these conditions that she visited the consul in Phoenix, Arizona and begged the consul to help her return to Mexico to live with her aunt. The consul, however, denied her request and barely paid her any attention. Emilia asked the president to consider her case in light of the love that he has for his own children.[23]

Dolores Pérez Gallardo composed a letter not as a daughter, but as a grandmother. From Pachuca, Hidalgo, she migrated to the United States with her husband in 1917. Ten years after their arrival her husband passed away. His death was followed her daughter's in 1931. This grandmother raised her daughter's three children, all five years of age and younger. Unemployed since July 1931, Dolores sustained her family by slowing selling "everything she owns." Her son-in-law contributed to their income but was only able to secure one-to-two days of work per every fifteen days. Like many other Mexicans, this grandmother hoped that the government would provide passage from the United States to Mexico. After learning from the consul that this was not possible, she wrote and asked the SRE to transport her from Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas to the capital and inquired about bringing back furniture.[24]

In their letters, migrants emphasized their connection to the nation by noting their previous contributions and their desire to be part of the nation's future. The "Colonia Agricola Pascual Ortíz Rubio" and Raymundo Gutiérrez provide two poignant examples. In their letter, the "Colonia Agricola Pascual Ortíz Rubio" reminded the president that workers in the United States organized to support the president's campaign. [25] They also assured him that they were ready to help with

[23] Emilia Guzmán to President Ortíz Rubio, May 14, 1931, Expediente IV-360-10, SRE.
[24] Luis G. Avelyera, esc de 2a de consulado encargado at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, May 6, 1932, Expediente IV-356-10, SRE.
[25] Colonia Agricola Pascual Ortíz Rubio to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio, January 21, 1931, Expediente IV-360-4, SRE

the "great reconstruction of our beloved nation." In fact, they were willing to endure the necessary sacrifice required for the nation's growth. [26] Their proposed agricultural colony in Sonora, they claimed, would bring the president great recognition and send a message "to the Americanized despots that our government supports those who are Mexicans at heart." [27]

Writing from Los Angeles, Raymundo Gutiérrez began his letter to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio by apologizing for taking his attention away from more pressing issues. His typed letter was justified, he contented, by his plight and by the fact that the president was his only hope. Raymundo aligned himself to the nation by noting that he had worked for the government. In fact, in his correspondence, he included several letters by government officials that attested to his previous employment. In addition, his motivation for writing sprang from a speech he heard in the winter of 1929. As part of a campaign tour throughout the United States, the Mexican community organized and attended a ceremony in honor of Pascual Ortíz Rubio at the Blackstone Hotel in Chicago. As a delegate of the Mexican colony, Gutiérrez was fortunate enough attend the event and "to be close to you." His wife Concepción P. D. Gutiérrez, a member of a local migrant organization, also attended and had the honor to be directly behind both Pascual Ortíz Rubio and his "excellent wife." It was Dr. Puig's speech at this event that inspired this migrant to write and ask the president for the "salvation of his family." Raymundo explained that he migrated to the United States in May 1927 and settled in Chicago. Without work and in an effort to avoid the harsh winter, his family relocated to Los Angeles, California in the summer of 1930. "Now," he wrote to the president, "with all the doors closed and all hope gone and before misery and nostalgia increase…I appeal to your sentiments as a human and the absolute chief of our nation to ask for

[26] Colonia Agricola Pascual Ortíz Rubio to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio, January 21, 1931, Expediente IV-360-4, SRE.
[27] Colonia Agricola Pascual Ortíz Rubio to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio, January 21, 1931, Expediente IV-360-4, SRE.

transportation from Los Angles to the capital, where we are all from." He concluded by emphasizing his family's future contributions to the nation. Helping this "son of the nation" today, he reasoned, would provide it with three sons ready to "defend, honor, and serve" it tomorrow.[28]

Covering the cost of migrants' transportation within the United States was not part of the Mexican state's repatriation plan. Indeed, the Mexican government relied on private individuals, local U.S. charity organizations, and migrant groups such as honorary commissions to transport Mexicans to the U.S.-Mexico border. Thus, it is not surprising that the SRE denied the majority of migrants' requests for funds. Raymundo Gutiérrez received an unfavorable response despite his previous employment, nationalist language, and dire need. In most cases, letters to presidents or other officials were forwarded to the SRE, who then wrote to and asked consular officials to provide an official response. Manuel Salgado's case provides a good example of this process. The consul at Denver, Colorado informed Manuel Salgado that the Mexican government was unable to help his family unless they reached the border and that they should seek the aid of charity organizations and the Mexican community.[29] If the family managed to arrive to Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico's migration authorities would facilitate free passage to their final destination.[30] In other words, the SRE was able to help migrants once they arrived to the border.

Even though the Mexican government did not grant most requests, consular officials throughout the United States did attempt to provide alternative forms of aid. The San Diego consul informed Jesús García, Guadalupe García's son, that San Diego County was working to repatriate Mexicans who lived in the area and that he should visit the San Diego Welfare Commission.[31] Consular officials also wrote to honorary commissions and migrant organizations to inquire about

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[28] Raymundo Gutiérrez to President Pascual Ortíz Rubio, January 5, 1931, Expediente IV-356-37, SRE.
[29] El subsecretario to consul, Denver Colorado, April 11, 1932, Expediente IV-354-45, SRE.
[30] El subsecretario to consul, Denver Colorado, April 11, 1932, Expediente IV-354-45, SRE.
[31] Enrique Ferreira, consul at San Diego, to Jesús G. González, February 19, 1932, Expediente IV-360-44, SRE.

raising money for particular families. For example, after learning about Francisco Valladeres' sister Victoria and nine of her family members, the SRE wrote to the consul at Saint Louis to inquire if a charity organization could fund their passage to the border.[32] The consul approached the president of a local benevolent association and the president of the "Club México." The former noted that they had a small amount of money left and that it could be given to this family. The consul at Kansas City found Enrique de la Torre, Esther's son, a seat in the car of a private individual. [33] Carpooling was a common practice among migrants and often included entire families. For example, Joaquín Duarte, a long-time resident of San Diego, visited the Mexican consul and expressed his desire to return to Mexico City, his hometown, along with his wife María M. De Duarte, his wife's sister Carmen Moreno, and Carmen's newborn. Like many Mexicans he was unemployed and unable to pay his passage. The consul found a fellow Mexican to give all these individuals a ride to El Paso, Texas.[34]

The few successful petitions reveal the importance of gender and political connections. Approximately three weeks after addressing the president, Emilia Guzmán received a letter from the Mexican government instructing her to visit the consul at Phoenix, Arizona to collect twenty dollars. These funds were intended to cover transportation from Phoenix to Nogales, Sonora where Mexico's migration authorities would provide free passage to Guadalajara, Jalisco.[35] Before the letter arrived, however, the consul worked with SEGOB to provide transportation for Emilia, which meant that she no longer needed twenty dollars from the SRE.[36] In this instance, both the

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[32] El oficial mayor to consul at St. Louis, Missouri, November 15, 1931, Expediente IV-360-21, SRE.
[33] C.M. Gaxiola to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, October 3, 1931; C.M. Gaxiola to Delegado de Immigracion, Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, November 20, 1931, Expediente IV-356-21, SRE.
[34] Armando C. Amador, consul at San Diego, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, March 31, 1932, Expediente IV-360-46, SRE.
[35] El Oficial Mayor, P.O. del Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, to Emilia Guzmán, June 3, 1931, Expediente IV-360-10, SRE.
[36] Luis F. Castro, consul at Phoenix, Arizona, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, June 11, 1931, Expediente IV-360-10, SRE.

the consul and SRE worked to provide this young migrant with aid. After arriving to Guadalajara, Emilia composed one more letter to the president. "I wish I could manifest," she wrote, "to you my sincere appreciation for what you did for me."[37]

While patriarchy benefited Guzmán, not all females in need were provided financial assistance. For example, the Mexican consul in Pittsburg was unable to secure funds from the SRE for Cecilia Guerrero. The Mexican consul visited Guerrero after hearing that there was a "Mexican of old age, sick and in urgent need, who required protection." The consul traveled to Monessen, Pennsylvania and discovered that Cecilia was seventy years old and was truly in a state of "poverty." This migrant from Michoacán told the consul that she was alone, without any resources, and wanted to return to Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, where her son lived. The consul wrote to the consul general in New York, who in turn wrote to the SRE. He explained that the local Mexican migrant community supported her in the past, but was no longer able to do so. As a result of the economic crisis, industrial production in the region declined by seventy-five percent and left many local migrants unemployed or working just one-to-two days per week. Local charity organizations were also unable to help Cecilia or fund her passage to the border. Thus, the consul requested sixty dollars and twenty-three cents to cover her transportation from Pennsylvania to Laredo, Texas.[38] The Secretary of Foreign Relations did not approve this request.[39]

Government employees and politicians succeed based on their standing and clout. Cárlos J. Ponce, the postal employee based in Veracruz, was instructed to tell his sister to visit the consul and ask for aid. If she was able to get to the border, the government could provide free passage to

[37] Emilia Guzmán to President Ortíz Rubio, June 30, 1931, Expediente IV-360-10, SRE.
[38] Mexican consul at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania to general consul at New York, May 15, 1931, Expediente IV-360-57, SRE
[39] Joaquin Terrazas, general consul at New York, to consul at Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, June 17, 1931, Expediente IV-360-57, SRE.

her final destination.[40] Cárlos was thrilled with the government's support and asked the SRE to "accept his gratitude."[41] Enrique Romero Courtade, the Secretario Feneral de Departamento del Distrito Federal, secured free transportation for the Gallardo family. On April 4, just a few weeks after receiving Courtade's letter, the undersecretary of the SRE authorized the consul at Kansas to allocate 125 dollars towards the Gallardo's transportation.[42] Guillermo Rodriguez, a deputy of the lower house of the legislature, successfully secured thirteen dollars and ninety-nine cents to cover his younger brother's travel from Galveston, Texas to Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas.[43]

Documented Migrants

The Mexican state did more than just facilitate communication between migrant communities and the Mexican state. They provided migrant communities with information and documents. To fully understand the role of Mexican consuls during the Great Depression it is important to examine the infrastructure that consuls and Mexican communities created and used to exchange knowledge and papers. Below I narrate the different means by which Mexican consular officials disseminated information and corresponded with migrants and then examine the numerous documents that consuls issued and helped migrants obtain. These documents, I argue, facilitated Mexicans' return to Mexico and their potential future migration to the United States.

In an effort to reach as many Mexican as possible, consular officials organized meetings with Mexican communities within their jurisdiction. The consul at Hidalgo, Texas, Kansas City, Missouri, and Yuma, Arizona, provide three important examples of this labor. Consular officials held meetings regularly, including on weekends. This allowed migrants to attend meetings without

[40] Oscar N. Lupian, El Oficial Mayor, to Carlos J. Ponce, August 17, 1932, Expediente IV-360-32, SRE.
[41] Cárlos J. Ponce to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, August 20, 1932, Expediente IV-360-32, SRE.
[42] Fernando Torreblanca, Subsecreatario de Relaciones Exteriores, to Enrique Romero Courtade, Secretario General de Departamento del Distrito Federal, April 16, 1932, Expediente IV-360-56, SRE.
[43] See correspondence between the Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores and Mexican consuls in expediente IV-356-13, SRE.

missing work and allowed consular officials to be present at their office during the weekdays. S.J. Treviño, the consul at Yuma, Arizona, for example, organized twelve meetings with local migrant communities from January 1930 to January 1931.[44] Consular officials visited large cities within their jurisdiction, ones that contained established Mexican communities, but they also visited remote towns with newly formed Mexican enclaves. For example, the consul at Hidalgo, Texas described communities by their proximity to highways and cities. One community was three miles east of Mission city and near Highway 2. Another migrant enclave was approximately eight miles north of McAllen and close to Highway 5.[45] These "colonies," according to the consul at Hidalgo, Texas were removed from "all centers of culture and all modes of communication."[46] Perhaps no other consular official traveled as much as Alfredo Vazquez. Based out of Kansas City, Missouri he drove 710 miles to speak with a Mexican community based in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. While he left Friday at five-thirty in the morning, snow and car problems slowed him done. He arrived to Scottsbluff on Saturday, late in the afternoon.[47]

These consular visits attracted large crowds. While one consular official reported a small group of twenty-three, other representatives of the Mexican state frequently estimated crowds of 200, 300, and 500. Writing to the consul general at New Orleans, Louisiana, Alfredo Vazquez claimed that there were more than 2,000 people at one meeting. "I think," he wrote, "without fear of being wrong, that there were more than two thousand…"[48] In addition to large meetings,

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[44] S.J. Treviño, consul at Yuma, Arizona, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, January 7, 1931, Expediente IV-263-89, SRE.
[45] S.J. Treviño, Mexican consul at Hidalgo to consul general at San Antonio, May 14, 1929, Expediente IV-263-45, SRE.
[46] S.J. Treviño, Mexican consul at Hidalgo to consul general at San Antonio, May 14, 1929, Expediente IV-263-45, SRE.
[47] Alfredo Vazquez, consul at Kansas City, Missouri, to consul general at New Orleans, Louisiana, March 28, 1930, Expediente IV-100-2, SRE.
[48] Alfredo Vazquez, consul at Kansas City, Missouri, to consul general at New Orleans, Louisiana, March 28, 1930, Expediente IV-100-2, SRE.

officials held private consultations. Vazquez's visit to Scottsbluff provides us with a glimpse into their efforts to reach migrant communities. The consuls opened his visit by hosting a meeting on Saturday evening. Cleofas Z. Guzmán, the president of the honorary commission, introduced the consul and played an important role throughout the weekend. After this meeting, the consul went to Guzmán's home and met privately with individuals and answered many of their questions. So many migrants visited Guzmán's house, that the consul was forced to extend his hours until 11pm, two hours passed the programmed time. Word of the consul's visit spread and the following morning Mexicans from Minatare, Bayard, Lymum, Morril, Gehring and Bridgeport arrived to Scottsbluff. Some of them arrived to Vazquez's hotel as early as seven am. Instead of speaking with them at the hotel, he directed them to Guzmán's home, where he met with approximately 100 Mexicans. After about two hours of private consultations, the consul headed to a hall, where he spoke with more than 2,000 migrants. [49]

While these meetings attracted large crowds, consular officials understood that their audience extended well beyond those in attendance. For example, during a visit to San Juan, Texas, one consul asked migrants to share what they had learned with their friends and family. Word of mouth, the consul reasoned, was the best way to reach out to those who could not read and those who resided in remote areas. [50] Most importantly, when they visited a community that did not have an honorary commission they helped found one and often encouraged individuals to run for an elected position such as president or vice president. Consular officials viewed these organizations as intermediaries between migrant communities and the state and as a means to collect and distribute resources to needy families. The Mexican consuls were successful in their efforts. In its

[49] Alfredo Vazquez, consul at Kansas City, Missouri, to consul general at New Orleans, Louisiana, March 28, 1930, Expediente IV-100-2, SRE.
[50] Mexican consul at Hidalgo to consul general at San Antonio, May 2, 1929, Expediente IV-263-44, SRE.

1932 yearbook, the SRE noted the growth of honorary commissions across the United States, but especially in California, Texas, New Mexico, and Kansas. By the end of July 1931, 100 honorary commissions existed throughout the United States.[51]

News traveled between migrants and consular officials in three additional manners. First, consular officials worked with local Spanish-language newspapers to publish short articles related to the repatriation process. Second, migrants were active participants in this process and visited Mexican consuls. Lastly, as demonstrated in this and other chapters, migrants and the state corresponded through letter writing. It was through these various modes of communication that migrants learned about Mexico's colonization plans and acquired numerous documents to aid their movement across the U.S.-Mexico border. Below, I outline the documents that migrants acquired to return to Mexico and those that some gathered to safeguard their potential re-entry into the United States.

In 1929, the SRE instructed consuls to provide migrants with "matrículas," or Mexican citizenship papers.[52] This was an ambitious project. The San Diego consul, for example, corresponded with all the honorary commissions in his district.[53] This document, the consul at Albuquerque, New Mexico informed the local honorary commission, helped facilitate migrants' interactions with the consul and the Mexican government as well as their return to Mexico. Mexican citizenship papers were generally not issued to women who were married or who were part of a family that contained a male over the age of twenty-one.[54]

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51 Memoria de la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Agosto de 1930 a Julio de 1931, SRE.
52 Enrique Ferreira, consul at San Diego, California, to subecretario encargado del despacho de relaciones exteriores April 24, 1929, Expediente IV-103-27, SRE.
53 Enrique Ferreira, consul at San Diego, California, to subecretario encargado del despacho de relaciones exteriores, April 29, 1929, Expediente IV-103-27, SRE.
54 Unsigned letter to honorary consul at Yuma, Arizona, February 24, 1932, Expediente IV-342-53, SRE.

As Mexicans felt the weight of the economic crisis and contemplated or prepared to return to Mexico, the matrícula grew in importance. According to consul at San Diego, the Mexican community was apathetic about registering at the consul throughout the 1920s and only did so when they encountered serious challenges. After WWI, the consul claimed, there was very little reason to register and only in rare instances did migrants obtain Mexican citizenship paper. As demand grew, the consul adapted to the needs of its citizens. To receive a matrícula, Mexicans filled out a form, provided two photographs, and paid ninety-eight cents. In light of the crisis, many migrants found themselves unable to pay. [55] In October 1931, the consul at Yuma, Arizona asked the SRE for authorization to waive the fee for indigent Mexicans.[56] The SRE granted this request. In its response to the consul, the SRE noted that the goal of Article 316 of the consular regulations was to issue as many matrículas as possible.

For some migrants, traveling to the consul presented an additional obstacle. To alleviate this burden, the consul general at San Antonio, Texas asked the SRE to grant him permission to mail blank matrículas to honorary commissions, who would then distribute these to interested Mexicans.[57] The SRE denied this request arguing that it would create "serious inconveniences," but it did offer a solution. It allowed honorary commissions to mail individual applications to the consul, who would then approve the solicitation and mail it back to the honorary commissions.[58] This proved to be useful and other migrant organizations requested application forms. For example, the "Círculo industrial de trajabadores industriales" of Carlsbad, California requested

[55] Eduardo Soriano Bravo, consul at Albuquerque, New Mexico, August 11, 1931, Expediente IV-342-21, SRE.
[56] S.J. Treviño, consul at Yuma, Arizona, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, October 6, 1931, Expediente IV-342-53, SRE

[57] E. Hernández Cházaro, consul general at San Antonio, Texas, to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriories, December 9, 1931, Expediente IV-342-3, SRE.
[58] El official mayor, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, to consul general at San Antonio, Texas, December 16, 1931, Expediente IV-342-3, SRE.

500 application forms.[59] Like honorary commissions and migration organizations, individual migrants could submit and receive matrículas through the mail.

Mexican consuls recorded the number of matrículas they issued as well as each applicant's name, age, place of birth, occupation, and marital status. Migrant fathers and single males made up the majority of recipients, but migrant children born in the United States were also issued matrículas. In some instances, fathers sought to provide their children with matrículas. Felipe Espinosa, a migrant from the state of San Luis Potosí, wanted his two Texas-born boys to acquire Mexican citinzeship papers.[60] Lorenzo Magdaleno, on the other hand, took it upon himself to obtain a matrícula. He wrote to the San Diego consul and declared his intent to "voluntarily [and] wholeheartedly embrace the nationality of my parents." Born in San Diego in 1907, he was following the rule of law, which stipulated that children of Mexican nationals born in the United States held dual nationality, but were required to declare their preference once they turned eighteen in order to conserve their Mexican nationality.[61] Repatriates were able to obtain a matrícula and make claims to U.S. citizens. For example, a few months after receiving his matrícula, Lorenzo obtained proof of U.S. citizenship from the immigration officials in San Ysidro, San Diego.[62] Mexican citizenship papers, moreover, did not except U.S.-born Mexicans from their responsibilities as U.S. citizens. Mexican officials consistently notified migrant parents that obtaining Mexican citizenship papers did not except their children from enlisting or fighting in the United States' armed services.

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59 Enrique Ferreira, consul at San Diego, California, to consul general at San Francisco, California, May 20, 1929, Expediente IV-68-8, SRE.
60 Felipe Espinosa to Secretario de Relaciones Exteriores, September 24, 1929, Expediente IV-103-24, SRE.
61 Enrique Ferreira, consul at San Diego, California, to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, June 18, 1931, Expediente IV-342-46, SRE.
62 Enrique Ferreira, consul at San Diego, California, to Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, June 18, 1931, Expediente IV-342-46, SRE.

If matrículas helped identify individuals as Mexican citizens, a "certificado de Residencia" or certificate of residency was intended to differentiate between Mexicans who were "repatriates" and thus worthy of state support and recent migrants. The Mexican government issued this document to migrants who had resided in the United States for more than six months and enabled repatriates to import a range of items without paying an import tax. The type and number of items varied, but often included automobiles, tractors for agricultural work, domestic animals, pianos, music players, clothing, and food. Relocating to another country was a burdensome task and migrants worked to increase the amount and number of items that they could return with. For example, the consul at Denver, Colorado worked with the SRE and the general customs office to allow repatriates to bring four tires with them. In the United States, the consul reasoned, migrants could purchase refurbished tires cheaply for just four or five dollars. These extra tires, the consul explained, were vital to ensure migrants' long journeys to places like Michoacán and Jalisco.[63]

In addition to issuing these documents, consular officials wrote countless letters of introduction. Addressed to civil and military officials as well as custom authorities, these letters were intended to aid repatriates' entry into Mexico. Los Angeles Consul Joel Quiñones informed Mexico's civil and military authorities that Francisco González, along with his mother, wife, and three children, were repatriated with aid from local charity organizations. Because they were limited in resources, the consul thanked Mexico's officials for whatever help they could provide.[64] In another letter, the Los Angeles consul notified the custom authorities that María Muñoz would be traveling to Mexico with four trunks of clothing, which were donated to her.[65]

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63 Memoria de la Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, Agosto de 1930 a Julio de 1931, SRE.
64 Joel Quiñones, Los Angeles consul, to "to whom it may concern," August 12, 1930, Expediente IV-31-1-I, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, August 1930, SRE.
65 Joel Quiñones, Los Angeles consul, to "to whom it may concern," December 13, 1929, Expediente IV-31-1-I, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, August 1930, SRE.

Planning for Re-Entry

Consular officials used meetings, personal correspondences, and announcements in the Spanish-language press to inform migrants about the process of returning to Mexico as well as the need to acquire documents to aid their potential re-entry into the United States. An official at the Los Angeles consul, for example, informed the migrant José Galindo that it was "absolutely necessary to receive a copy or testimony of your legal entrance [into the United States] before you depart for Mexico, in order to facilitate your return entry to the United States…" This was so important that consular officials indicated the date and location of a migrant's entry into the United States on each and every single matrícula.[66] While it is not clear when consular officials began doing this, it was common practice by 1929. Moreover, after February 12, 1931, the SRE recommended that consular officials include an English translation for each matrícula.[67]

In addition to this document, consular officials helped migrants locate lost documents, instructed them to obtain letters from landlords and employers, and wrote both specific and generic letters of introduction. The head tax was one of the most important documents. When crossing the border, migrants paid a head tax to U.S. immigration officials which functioned as a receipt and confirmed one's date and place of legal entry. However, migrants often lost their head-tax receipt. Pablo Padilla, for example, notified the Los Angeles consul that he did not have his "immigration documents." Using Padilla's date of entry, the consul wrote to the immigration authorities at El Paso, Texas to request proof of this migrant's legal entry into the United States.[68] In their letters to U.S. immigration authorities stationed at the various entry points, consular officials indicated a

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66 Enrique Ferreira, consul at San Diego, California, to subecretario encargado del despacho de relaciones exteriores, April 29, 1929, Expediente IV-103-27, SRE.
67 El official mayor, Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, to Fernando Alatorre, consul at San Bernardino, February 12, 1931, Expediente IV-342-56, SRE.
68 Enrique Bravo, vicecónsul at Los Angeles, California, to Pablo Padilla, October 30, 1929, Expediente IV-71-1-II, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, 1929 to 1930, SRE.

migrant's place and date of entry as well as the number of family members that accompanied said migrant. When the exact date was unknown, they provided a window of tentative dates, such as January 20 to 23, 1919 for Santos Mendez and April 1923 for José Santillan.

Officials at Mexican consuls also instructed the Mexican community to obtain letters from Americans. In 1930, the general consul at El Paso, Texas notified the Los Angeles consul that Mexicans were arriving to the border without a letter of recommendation from their employer that attested to their time in the United States. To correct this error, the consul general asked consular officials to inquire with the local newspapers about periodically publishing a note which would direct migrants to obtain a letter of recommendation from their employer and landlords as well as receipts for items they had purchased.[69] These letters should indicate migrants' residency in the United States. As it had in the past, *La Opinion* published a note from the consul to the Mexican community. To facilitate executing these documents, the consul general provided the consul at Yuma, Arizona with a copy of the form they provided for those writing letters.[70] Miguel Venegas, who returned to Mexico for a short trip in the early 1930s and again from 1940 to 1942 received letters from his landlord and from Monarch food distributors.[71]

As we might expect, consular officials also provided migrants with letters that attested to their time in the United States. In addition, however, Mexican officials vouched for migrants' character. Joel Quiñones' letters for Mr. and Mrs. J Norberto Mirano and Juan Lopez provide two examples. "This is to certify that I have known Mr. and Mrs. J. Norberto Mirano for over five years as residents of the city of Glendale," the Mexican consul wrote in a letter addressed "to

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[69] Joel Quiñones, vicecónsul at Los Angeles, California, to *La Opinión*, August 28, 1930, Expediente IV-31-1-I, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, August 1930, SRE.

[70] L. Medina Barrón, consul general at El Paso, Texas, to consul at Yuma, Arizona, September 11, 1930, Expediente IV-263-89, SRE.

[71] See Box 5, Venegas Family Papers, 099, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California.

whom it may concern." Norberto Mirano was, in the words of this Mexican official, "a reliable and honest person and hard working." These traits empowered the consul to "recommend him as to the veracity of any information that he may give regarding his stay in this country."[72] In his letter for Juan López, Joel Quiñones noted that he entered the United States through El Paso, Texas on March 23, 1924. Juan resided, the letter affirmed, in the United States from his time of entry. The consul closed this brief letter by affirming its significance: "I sincerely trust this letter will be of assistance to him, especially in matters of immigration to the United States."[73]

Lastly, migrants received letters from consular officials that stipulated they were merely visiting and not relocating to Mexico. "The bearer of this letter is Professor Ernesto Gonzalez Jimenez…who is going to Tijuana, for the purpose of showing a Spanish talking film…" Consul Pesqueira wrote to Clifford Perkins, the inspector in charge at the U.S. immigration department in San Ysidro, California. The professor entered the United States in 1919 and had all the proper paperwork. The consul asked the immigration official to "kindly stamp his documents so that he can go to Tijuana and return without difficulty."[74] While this visit was for a specific purpose, other trips were much more open ended. For example, José Moreno, a member of the confederation of Mexican societies who had resided in Los Angeles for fifteen years, planned to "spend a short vacation in lower California." He carried with him "letters and recommendations" attesting to his time in the United States. The Mexican consul at Los Angeles asked the U.S. immigration inspector at San Ysidro, California, to assist Moreno in "crossing the line without difficulties."[75]

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[72] F. A. Pesqueira, consul at Los Angeles, to "to whom it may concern," August 18, 1930, Expediente IV-31-1-I, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, August 1930, SRE.
[73] Joel Quiñones, official at Los Angeles consul, to "to whom it may concern," August 28, 1930, Expediente IV-31-1-I, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, August 1930, SRE.
[74] F. A. Pesqueira, consul at Los Angeles, to Mr. Clifford Perkins, inspector in charge, U.S. immigration department, San Ysidro, California, August 22, 1930, Expediente IV-31-1-I, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, August 1930, SRE.
[75] F. A. Pesqueira, consul at Los Angeles, to U.S. immigration inspector, San Ysidro, California, August 22, 1930, IV-31-1-I, Los Angeles consul, Asuntos de Proteccion, August 1930, SRE.

Conclusion

This chapter contributes to scholarship on repatriation by situating migrant families within a transnational context. It conceptualizes migrants as Mexican citizens and examines their interactions with the Mexican state. By doing this, it is possible to examine their desires and agency and avoid producing narratives that privilege the actions and policies of U.S. officials. While some migrants were deported and others were coerced into returning to Mexico, many left voluntarily. As I demonstrate, they wrote to consular officials, government agencies, and the Mexican president in hopes of acquiring free passage to the U.S.-Mexico border. They were often discouraged by the Mexican state's inability to transport them to the U.S.-Mexico border. Either way, these letters show the ways in which Mexican migrants carefully crafted narratives to secure rights as Mexican citizens and that they desired to return to Mexico.

By detailing the consuls labor and migrant-consular correspondence during the economic crisis it becomes apparent that for many Mexicans repatriation was not an unplanned and haste return. In fact, Mexican consuls created an entire infrastructure to disseminate knowledge and papers and functioned as intermediaries between migrant communities and the U.S. and Mexican state. As the details of the matrícula demonstrates, consular officials simultaneously disseminated information about entering Mexico and returning to the United States. In addition to citizenship papers and the certificate of residency, migrants acquired proof of their residency in the United States and legal entry.

This history of paper trails is not intended to dismiss the United States' treatment of Mexicans during the Great Depression or the ways in which Mexican migrants became increasingly associated with illegality after the Immigration Act of 1924. Rather, it seeks to

contribute to this narrative by carefully exploring the relationship between Mexican migrants and Mexican consuls. As Mexican citizens, migrants were able to accumulate a range of papers, which they hoped would allow them to cross the border. Movement across the border and in both directions, I show, was facilitated and not hindered by consular officials. In short, migrants were not passive victims of repatriation and did their best to leverage their Mexican citizenship. Chapter Four and Chapter Five explore the agency of migrants and migrant families by examining the role of the families during the economic crisis and the efforts of U.S. citizens to make claims to U.S. citizenship from within Mexico.

Chapter 4

The Family and the Great Depression

Mexican consuls played an important role in the repatriation process. The movement of hundreds of thousands of Mexicans—whether through coercion, pressure, or their own volition—would not have been possible without the participation of the Mexican government. The state provided repatriates with a range of documents and sometimes transportation, but did very little to help them re-integrate into Mexican society. While scholars of repatriation focus on the state's colonization efforts, it is important to note that the majority of repatriates did not participate in these state led resettlement projects. Abraham Hoffman estimates that only five percent of all repatriates participated in the Mexican government's colonization projects.[1] While President Lázaro Cárdenas' administration appeared to be pro-active—state officials examined the availability of land and visited the United States—repatriation was never a major priority. The Cárdenas administration initiated La Colonia Agrícola 18 de Marzo in Tamaulipas, but this colonization project was rather small and poorly financed. In short, a focus on state policy and state-migrant relations provides an important, but incomplete portrait of repatriation.

The family played a central role throughout the repatriation process. We know from both Mexican and U.S. historians that two thirds of those who were repatriated traveled as members of a family and that from 1929 to 1934 children of migrants accounted for forty percent of those who returned to Mexico.[2] Despite the prominence of the family, historians of repatriation have not used the family or even generation as a category of analysis. This chapter utilizes oral histories conducted with repatriates during the 1970s, the scholarship and ethnographic notes of scholars

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1 Abraham Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression: Repatriation Pressures, 1929-1939* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1974).
2 Ibid

writing and working in the 1930s, and the writings of repatriates themselves to narrate how the family operated during the Great Depression. I demonstrate that family members helped repatriates decide whether or not to return to Mexico, provided temporary and semi-permanent housing for those that returned, and, in some cases, employment opportunities and other forms of support. It was the family that provided the necessary infrastructure to accommodate repatriates. Children and youth born and raised in the United States were central actors in this process. When examining the experience of migrant children, repatriation scholars tend to highlight their negative experiences in Mexico and their affinity for the United States. Pushing against scholars' interpretation of this cohort as "cultural misfits," I argue that migrant children and youth could simultaneously feel distance and affinity towards living and residing in Mexico.[3] More importantly, I focus on this cohort's ability to move between American and Mexican institutions and people. Framing migrant children in this manner makes it possible to conceptualize them as active and productive individuals who contributed to their families' well-being. Together, these transnational strategies illustrate how repatriates worked with and relied on family members on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border to weather the Great Depression.

Deciding to Return

As Chapter Three demonstrates, repatriates traveled to Mexico in large groups, often in several cars that included numerous families and friends. Like moving to Mexico, deciding to return was a collective process. Migrants consulted with relatives in the United States and in their hometowns. Oral histories, ethnographic notes, and correspondence with government officials give us a glimpse into migrants' memories and experiences. For example, reflecting on the Great

[3] See Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans*; Linda C. Noel, *Debating American Identity: Southwestern Statehood and Mexican Immigration* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014); Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

Depression for an oral history conducted in 1971, Theresa Martínez Southard recalled how her father decided to return in consultation with his sister. Her uncle was very much opposed to this decision and stayed in Riverside to watch over the Martínez's home.[4] The relatives of one repatriate encouraged him to return to Penjamo, Guanajuato to start a business. He could, they optimistically speculated, "live the rest of your days without working."[5] However, these sources do not tell us much about the actual process. In this regards, the history and personal correspondence of the Venegas family provide a rare and unique opportunity to reconstruct one family's decision to stay or return to Mexico.[6]

Dolores and Miguel were born in Zapotlanejo, a small town located in Los Altos de Jalisco. This predominately agricultural region was made up of mestizos and by the early twentieth century became a migrant-sending region.[7] They wed in 1919 and the following year had their first boy, whom they named José Miguel. On February 22, 1921 Dolores gave birth to Ricardo, their second son. One year later Miguel, Dolores and their two children moved into their new home. Here, they welcomed Guillermo on April 9, 1924 and Eduardo on May 10, 1926. The family enjoyed a comfortable existence. Miguel operated a profitable store in the town, both his and Dolores'

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4 Theresa Martínez Southard, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 1, 1971, Mexican American Community History Project, The Center for Oral and Public History, California State University, Fullerton, Fullerton, California (Hereafter, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California).

5 James Carl Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico of the Mexican Repatriation Movement" (MA Thesis., University of Southern California, 1934).

6 Migrant correspondence played a central role in the development of U.S. immigration history. There is a robust secondary literature on European migrant letter writing as well as archival collections. Yet, despite the long history of migration from the United States' southern neighbor, there is a dearth of scholarship based on Mexican migrant letters. In recent years, historians have begun to collect, preserve, and write about Mexican migrants and letter writing. The Venegas Family Papers were opened in 2012. For more on this collection and migrant letter writing see Romeo Guzmán, "The Transnational Life and Letters of the Venegas Family, 1920s to 1950s," *The History of the Family*, Vol. 21, 3 (2016). For more on Mexican migrants and letter writing see Ana Elizabeth Rosas, *Abrazando el Espíritu: Bracero Families Confront the U.S.-Mexico Border* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2014) and Miroslava Chávez-García's current research project "Migrant Longing and Letter Writing Across the Borderlands," which is based on her family's letters from the 1960s.

7 David Fitzgerald, *A Nation of Emigrants: How Mexico Manages its Migration* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2009).

parents and siblings lived nearby, and they all frequented the town's church on Sundays. This would all quickly change.

President Plutarco Elías Calles' efforts to enforce the anti-clerical Articles of the Mexican Constitution of 1917 led to the Cristero Rebellion (1926 to 1929), an armed conflict between church and state. These Articles sought to ban religious primary schools, prohibit the church from owning property, and subordinate the church and clergy to the Mexican state. Devout Catholics in the western states of Mexico organized, protested, and eventually formed armed militias.[8] As a member of "Union Popular"—a civic and religious organization based in Guadalajara that was connected to the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty—and a resident of the small town of Zapotlanejo, Miguel Venegas was quickly engulfed in this conflict. He attended meetings, distributed propaganda at his general grocery store, and, for a short period, formed part of the armed insurgents.

There, in the hills of Los Altos, Miguel was charged with leading a group of armed followers: "Well, each one carried his small pistol, his small knife, and rode his small horse. To defend religion, you know?...except that we never had an exchange of fire."[9] Back in Zapotlanejo, the local government closed down his general store, and froze his assets. To make matters worse, the Mexican state found a fervent supporter in Rosario Orozco, the local "cacique." As the conflict intensified, Miguel had two viable options: wait and engage the state in armed conflict or migrate

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8 Matthew Butler, "The 'Liberal' Cristero: Ladislao Molina and the Cristero Rebellion in Michoacán, 1927-9," *Journal of Latin American Studies,* Vol. 31, No. 3 (1999); Matthew Butler, *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927-9* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2004); Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán,* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999); Julia G. Young, "Cristero Diaspora: Mexican Immigrants, The U.S. Catholic Church, and Mexico's Cristero War, 1926-29," *The Catholic Historical Review,* Vol. 98, No. 2 (2012); Julia G. Young, *Mexican Exodus: Emigrants, Exiles, and Refugees of the Cristero War*, (Oxford University Press, 2015).

9 Quoted in María Teresa Venegas Venegas, *Letters Home: Mexican Exile Correspondence from Los Angeles, 1927-1932*, (Los Angeles: Self Published, 2012), 13.

to the United States. While Miguel was a devout Catholic throughout this life, he did not want to be responsible for taking another human's life.[10] Like most Catholics during this period, he probably would have desired to defy the state through everyday actions instead of armed rebellion.[11] The local context, however, forced Miguel into a much more radical position. From camp, he corresponded with Dolores and she and their four boys joined him. Together, they journeyed north to Aguascalientes where they decided that Dolores and the children would take a train to Guadalajara and Miguel would continue north, to the United States.[12]

Miguel crossed through the port of El Paso, Texas on May 17, 1927 and proceeded west, to Los Angeles, California, where he waited for his family.[13] The following September, Dolores' father Silviano escorted her and her four children to Los Angeles. As in Mexico, Miguel continued to work as businessman. Shortly, after their arrival he bought a grocery store. Separated from their kin—parents-grandparents, brothers-uncles, sisters-aunts, and nephews-cousins—the Venegas family used correspondences, handwritten letters and photographs, to maintain communication and form a transnational family. Miguel mainly wrote to his father Juan Venegas and brother Francisco, while Dolores corresponded most frequently with her "comadre" Lupe and also wrote to her parents, her brother-in-law Francisco, and her husband's parents. The children wrote to their uncles and aunts. Collectively, these letter narrate the family's experience with the economic crisis.

By 1930, the Venegas family felt the effects of the depression. In a letter to his father, Miguel noted that there was very little work, which had a direct impact on the sales of the store.

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[10] María Teresa Venegas Venegas, *Letters Home: Mexican Exile Correspondence from Los Angeles, 1927-1932*, (Los Angeles: Self Published, 2012), 13.
[11] Matthew Butler, "The 'Liberal' Cristero: Ladislao Molina and the Cristero Rebellion in Michoacan, 1927-9" *Journal of Latin American Studies* Vol. 31, No. 3 (1999).
[12] María Teresa Venegas, *Letters Home: Mexican Exile Correspondence from Los Angeles, 1927-1932* (Los Angeles: Self Published, 2012).
[13] Miguel Venegas' Head Tax, Box 6, Venegas Family Papers, 099, Department of Archives and Special Collections, William H. Hannon Library, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles, California (Hereafter VFP, Los Angeles, California).

Since many transactions were done through credit, clients were unable to settle their accounts.[14] According to Miguel, work was scarce even for the "sons of this country."[15] Indeed, Miguel claimed that on trips to downtown white Americans asked him for money. In February 1931, he noted that he received a bad check for the amount of sixty dollars, the equivalent of more than $940 in today's dollars.[16] To make matters worse, the general hostility towards Mexicans added to the lack of employment opportunities. In the same month, Miguel informed his father that detectives searched for "illegal" Mexicans to deport. This produced fear among the entire Mexican population, including those with visas, like the Venegas family. While we know from the secondary literature that this effort was short lived, it succeeded in scaring the Mexican community.

In addition to keeping his father abreast of the crisis, Miguel used personal correspondence to weight his options and to solicit advice. At the outset of 1931, Miguel became aware of an opportunity to acquire land in newly irrigated lands in Baja California. He was under the impression that this was a public venture by the Mexican government.[17] A month later, he told his father that the venture was private and not public and that representatives of the project had yet to come to Los Angeles. These new developments did not discourage Miguel. Indeed, he invited his father to meet him in Tijuana to look at the land and to spend a few days in Los Angeles.[18] We do not know the father's response, but the absence of the proposition in letters written shortly after indicate that Miguel decided against the idea.

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[14] Translations for Venegas correspondence provided by author unless indicated. Miguel to Juan Venegas, March 6, 1930, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
[15] Miguel to Juan Venegas, January 29, 1931, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California (double check)
[16] Miguel to Juan Venegas, March 14, 1931, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
[17] Miguel to Juan Venegas, February 17, 1931, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
[18] Miguel to Juan Venegas, April 10, 1931, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.

As the summer arrived, another transnational possibility presented itself. Trino Alvarez, a Los Angeles resident and godson of Juan Venegas, offered to trade properties. In exchange for two homes, Miguel would give Trino a "terreno," a plot of rural agricultural land in Mexico. Since the Alvarez family was familiar with this terreno and Miguel was in Los Angeles, both parties would have known the properties under consideration. Moreover, Trino's brother wanted to return to Mexico and Trino himself would return if he ran out of work.[19] Ultimately, Miguel informed his father that he decided not to trade the properties. Trino owed too much on each house and Miguel feared that with so many Mexicans returning to Mexico it would have been difficult to find renters.[20] Miguel also considered opening up a bakery in Mexico. While Dolores's correspondences do not propose transnational land ventures, they nevertheless served a similar function. In a letter to her father-in-law, she noted that their "compadre" José and his entire family departed for the capital of Mexico. José informed Miguel and Dolores that everyday things were getting worse and that they should not return to Mexico.

In the spring of 1932, Miguel took a quick trip to Zapotlanejo to evaluate local conditions.[21] The family decided to remain in Los Angeles, but they reconsidered in the late 1930s.[22] In 1939, Miguel corresponded with his brothers Francisco and Agustin, who were both engaged in commerce. Francisco informed his brother that a bus company with service from Guadalajara to Morelia, Michoacán was looking for investors. But, he wrote, "if you want to give commerce a shot, when you arrive we can see what would be advantageous. You know you can count on us."[23]

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19 Miguel to Juan Venegas, June 24, 1931, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
20 Miguel to Juan Venegas, September 21, 1931, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
21 Miguel to Juan Venegas, April 22, 1932, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
22 While most repatriation occurred in the early 1930s, Mexicans considered returning in the late 1930s.
23 Francisco to Miguel Venegas, August 29, 1939, Box 2, VFP, Los Angeles, California.

Arriving with Family

In addition to helping migrants decide whether to stay in the United States or return to Mexico, family members in Mexico housed those who returned. During field work for his 1933 master's thesis, James C. Gilbert found that the majority of repatriates he encountered returned to their homes villages. Ninety percent of the repatriates who returned to Penjamo, Guanajuato, for example, had relatives who resided in the city.[24] Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso found a similar dynamic for San Luis Potosí.[25] Correspondence between U.S. charity organizations, U.S. consular officials, local Mexican government officials, and relatives in both Mexico and the United States confirm the important role of relatives in Mexico. In an effort to remove families composed of Mexican nationals and U.S. citizens from relief rolls, country charities asked U.S. consuls to locate and solicit funds from parents, siblings, and other family members. Relatives in Mexico consistently expressed their inability to financially support their loved ones living in the United States. Writing to the Pasadena Welfare Bureau in California from Guadalajara, Consul George H. Winters noted that of the "more than a hundred cases" investigated by the consul there was not a single instance in which relatives in Mexico mailed money to Mexicans in the United States."[26] While unsuccessful in their effort to place the financial cost associated with relief onto families in Mexico, relatives did provide the necessary infrastructure to accommodate those who returned to Mexico. Indeed, siblings, parents, and extended family provided repatriates with one of the most

[24] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."
[25] Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso, "Regreso a casa: la repatriación de mexicanos en Estados Unidos durante la gran depresión el caso de San Luis Potosí, 1929-1934" in *Estudios de Historia Moderna y Contemporánea de México*, eds., Marcela Terrazas y Basante (México, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México: Instituto de Inestigaciones Históricas, 2005).
[26] George H. Winters, consul at Guadalajara, to Mrs. C. Shugg, Pasadena Welfare Bureau, September 9, 1936, Box 3, Record Group 84, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, Records of Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (Hereafter, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD).

valuable resources: a place to take shelter.[27] The experiences of the Castañeda, Martínez, and Terriquez families provide three poignant examples.

The Castañeda family, like many others formed during the 1920s and 1930s, was composed of both Mexican nationals and U.S. citizens. Natividad was born in Ciudad Lerdo, Durango, while his wife, Gregoria, appears to have been born in San Luis Potosí. In 1924, Gregoria gave birth to Francisco, their first child. Two years later, she gave birth to Emilia, their second and last child. Both of the Castañeda children were citizens through birthright. Together, the family lived in a house on Folsom street in a neighborhood composed on Chinese, Japanese, and Jewish families. Their godparents living in the backhouse.[28]

Natividad learned stonemasonry from his father in Mexico and in Los Angeles worked laying brick and manipulating stone. During the Great Depression, Natividad was unable to find work and thus stayed home cooking, cleaning, and keeping house, while Gregoria worked as a domestic in west Los Angeles. While the family received clothing and food from county charities they struggled to stay afloat and were forced to move on four different occasions, most likely to find a cheaper place to rent. If times were difficult for the family, they soon became tragic. On May 20, 1934, Gregoria died of tuberculosis and left Natividad to care for Francisco and Emilia, who who were approximately ten and eight years old, respectively. With his wife gone, Natividad decided to return to Mexico. The family boarded a train at Union Station and departed for El Paso, Texas. From there they headed to Gómez Palacio, Durango, Natividad's hometown.[29]

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[27] Enciso, "Regreso a casa."
[28] Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, February 24 and March 9, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
[29] Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, February 24 and March 9, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.

In Mexico, Natividad's cousin Salvador welcomed the family of three into his one room home. With Salvador's wife, three boys, and three girls sleeping in the only available room, there was very little space for the Castañeda family and they were forced to sleep outside. Indeed, they had a difficult time making a new home for themselves and consistently relied on family for shelter. While a chronology is difficult to establish, the family lived with Natividad's cousin in Lerdo, Durango, with another relative in Bucareli, just north of Gómez Palacio, and with Chalío and Placida in an unidentified location.[30]

The Martínez family also arrived to a relative's small and overcrowded house. This family, which consisted of fifteen children, left their home in Casa Blanca, a migrant enclave of Riverside, California in 1931. They returned to Torreón, where Theresa's grandparents, uncles and aunts resided. Theresa's aunt welcomed the family to her home and provided them with one of her rooms. Taking advantage of the warm weather and to maximize space, some of the family slept outside, under the stars.[31] A couple who returned to the small village of Etúcaro, Michoacán also found themselves sharing small and humble quarters. Because there was only one bed, family members slept on straw mats and on the bare floor.[32]

Living with relatives enabled repatriates to live rent free, to overcome job insecurity and instability, and to pool their collective resources. This was the case with the Terriquez family, who left New York City in 1931. Juan Terriquez, a Mexican national, met and married Marrion Cordero in New York City, where they had four children.[33] From 1927 to 1930, Juan worked as a metal

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[30] Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, February 24 and March 9, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
[31] Theresa Martínez Southard, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 1, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
[32] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."
[33] Marrion Terriquez to Mr. Harry N. Hirsch, assistant commissioner, Department of Social Welfare, September 5, 1934, (date on document, likely written earlier), Box 1247, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (Hereafter, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD).

polisher at the Soss Manufacturing Company in New York City, where he earned forty-five dollars per week. In 1930, he was unable to find work and the family moved in with Marrion's sister.[34] By the summer of 1931 the family decided to return to Mexico. With assistance from charity organizations and family member, Marrion and Juan, and their four children, began their journey to Guadalajara. When they arrived to Veracruz, they sold their clothing and "other objects" in order to finance their trip to Mexico City. The Mexican government provided passage from the capital to the city of Guadalajara.[35] Like many repatriates, they arrived to and lived with Juan's parents, who also housed his siblings.[36] Living under one roof, the family put together their collective earnings. Juan's younger brother, Felipe, worked at "El Lápiz Rojo," where he earned one peso per day. Salvador was a traveling salesman for a match factory based in Ciudad Guzmán, Jalisco and earned three pesos per day. Single and without children, he gave his parents part of his income.[37] Shortly after they arrived, Juan began working at the Chapala Electric Company, where he earned two pesos and fifty cents per day.[38] The family struggled throughout the early 1930s, but eventually moved into their own apartment.

Whether it was the loss of a job or death of an individual, these families returned to Mexico under difficult circumstances. In Mexico, they continued to struggle. While housing was not a panacea, it was essential to their survival and helped ease their integration.

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[34] American Consulate, Guadalajara, to Secretary of State, August 20, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[35] Marrion Terriquez to Mr. Harry N. Hirsch, assistant commissioner, Department of Social Welfare, September 5, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD
[36] Harry A. Havens, acting chief of Foreign Service Administration, to José Cordero Junior, July 26, 1932, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD
[37] Raleigh A. Gibson, American consul at Guadalajara to Secretary of State, April 4, 1932, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[38] Raleigh A. Gibson, American consul at Guadalajara to Secretary of State, April 4, 1932, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

Children and Youth during the Great Depression

Scholars working in Mexico and the United States consistently note that migrant children with U.S. citizenship accounted for approximately forty percent of all repatriates. Yet, rather than interrogate citizenship or frame their studies around the family, historians tend to focus on repatriated children's experiences in and sentiment towards Mexico. Abraham Hoffman, who wrote about repatriation in 1974 argued that they viewed Mexico as a foreign land. Linda Noel, in her study of Arizona, focuses solely on their difficult adjustment.[39] This limited perspective of children born or raised in the United States reflects early scholarship on the "Mexican American" generation. According to Chicano/a scholars, this cohort was committed to civil rights and first-class citizenship and sought a place within the U.S. nation. By emphasizing repatriates' affinity to the United States and distance from Mexico, scholars working on repatriation seek to further demonstrate the negative outcomes of repatriation. U.S. officials' response to the Great Depression and efforts to repatriate Mexican migrant families, including U.S. citizens, should not be minimized. However, the manner in which scholars frame this cohort limits our ability to understand their time in Mexico, their agency, and their own role within their families, in both Mexico and the United States.[40]

A more careful understanding of the ways in which Mexicans experienced racism in the United States and the role of Mexican enclaves in shaping daily life, shifts our understanding of identity formation among migrant children. Indeed, recent scholarship on "Mexican Americans"

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[39] See Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans*; Noel, *Debating American Identity;* Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams*. In his article on San Luis Potosí, Saúl Alanís Enciso argues that despite some challenges, particularly with Spanish, migrant children adapted rather quickly to their new homes. Enciso does not, however, provide us with a close examination of this process or situate children within a transnational context. See Fernando Saúl Alanís Enciso, "Regreso a casa."

[40] Benny Jr. Andrés Jr makes a similar argument in his study of farm workers in the Imperial Valley during the 1930s. See "Invisible Borders: Repatriation and Colonization of Mexican Migrant workers along the California Borderlands during the 1930s" *California History* Vol. 88 (2011).

challenges earlier, nationalist interpretations. Focusing on sport, José M. Alamillo demonstrates that by working with the Confederación Deportiva Mexicana (CDM) during the 1930s, the Mexican Athletic Association of Southern California (MAASC) provided youth with transnational opportunities to compete in sport and connected them to "an emerging national identity."[41] For Alamillo, "becoming Mexican American and becoming Mexican were simultaneous occurrences within MAASC."[42] In his biography of Américo Paredes, one of the first Chicano scholars, Ramón Saldívar argues that Paredes espoused a "transcultural Mexican-American social imaginary" that challenged U.S. notions of citizenship.[43] In short, "Mexican American" identity was fluid, transnational, and not firmly tied to the U.S. nation.[44]

Building on these transnational perspectives, this section revisits the experiences of Mexican migrant children during the Great Depression and makes two important and related interventions. First, it shows that repatriates born or raised in the United States had a range of contradictory experiences and that their sentiment towards Mexico was not static or fixed over time. Many made friends, became more fluent in Spanish, and got married and formed new families. For some, repatriation provided an opportunity to create a connection with and affinity towards Mexico, one which found expression years after they had returned to the United States. From a more nuanced understanding of "Mexican Americans" it becomes possible to demonstrate that they used their available skills and resources to contribute to their family's well-being in the

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41 José M. Alamillo, "Playing Across Borders: Transnational Sport and Identities in Southern California and Mexico, 1930-1945" *Pacific Historical Review,* Vol. 79, No. 3 (August 2010).

42 Ibid. 391-392.

43 Ramón Saldívar, *Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).

44 Fighting for civil rights within the United States often involved a set of transnational actors. In Texas, the Mexican government and organizations and individuals on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border sought to secure the passage of civil rights legislation in 1941, 1943, and 1945. See Thomas A. Guglielmo, "Fighting for Caucasian Rights: Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and the Transnational Struggle for Civil Rights in World War II Texas," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 92 No. 4 (2006).

United States, to find employment in Mexico, and to aid their families as they collectively navigated the Great Depression. They were often able to move between American and Mexican institutions, organizations, and groups.[45]

Born or raised in the United States, migrant children were used to living in the United States. When they departed for Mexico, they left their homes, friends, schools, jobs, and, in some cases, family members. Indeed, many repatriates struggled to adjust to their new environment. After two years of living in Penjamo, Guanajuato, a young repatriate from Kansas City could not image staying in Mexico. He was born in Penjamo, but arrived to the United States with his family when he was just four years old. "You know," he told James Gilbert, "no matter how long I stay here, I can never be a Mexican. I just can't get used to calling this place home. Honest, I can't tell you how much I want to go back to the United States."[46] José G. Gonzalez, a repatriate born in California expressed a similar sentiment. "Every night," he said, "I dream of my country."[47] Reflecting on her experiences in Mexico for an oral history in 1971, Theresa Martínez Southard noted how much she missed the "states." "I would cry every night because I was very lonely," she told an interviewer.[48] In their oral histories with academics conducted in the 1970s, their conversations with scholars during the 1930s, and in their letters to family members, children of migrants articulated their unease with speaking, writing, and reading in Spanish and their disapproval of gender roles and practices, clothing and fashion, and labor.

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[45] In her study of Chinese migration and the middle class, Mae Ngai demonstrates how the Tape family used bilingualism and biculturalism for social and economic advancement. See *The Lucky One: One Family and the Extraordinary Invention of Chinese America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010). Scholars working on more contemporary migrant families also emphasize the agency of migrant children and youth. Marjorie Faulstich Orellana, for example, notes their role as linguistic and cultural brokers. See *Translating Childhoods: Immigrant Youth, Language, and Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009).

[46] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."

[47] Ibid.

[48] Theresa Martínez Southard, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 1, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.

While their parents were most likely monolingual Spanish speakers, repatriates struggled with the Spanish language. One repatriated girl in Guadalajara did not attend school because she did not know how to read or write in Spanish.[49] The Castañeda siblings also struggled with Spanish. To ease their transition their father Natividad found an elderly woman from the neighborhood to tutor them. The children spoke in English to her and she in turn spoke in Spanish to them.[50] Spanish language proficiency affected repatriates' ability to immerse themselves socially, but also served as a marker that distinguished repatriated children and youth from their Mexican counterparts. One young woman, who was referred to as a "Tejana" by her coworkers at Monterrey factory, speculated that Mexicans were able to distinguish between Mexicans and Mexicans who were born or raised in the United States by "the way we talk." "I didn't speak Spanish very well when I first came here," she added.[51] Reflecting on her time in Mexico, Emilia Castañeda described Mexicans' reaction to their use of English: "Yes, we were a novelty, because, I guess, we spoke mostly English. We used to go to the store and we used to refer to the money as pennies, not 'centavos.' So you know, the people used to laugh at us. They didn't really laugh at us, but they used to get a kick out of it..."[52] In Jalisco, the older sister of one U.S.-born repatriate noted that the local boys teased her brother because he was unable to speak Spanish.[53] A group of young men in Aguascalientes spoke English so frequently that they were referred to as "northerners." On one occasion, their use of English attracted the attention of a local cop, who immediately inquired about their nationality. When they said they were Mexicans, the police

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49 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."
50 Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, February 24 and March 9, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
51 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."
52 Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, February 24 and March 9, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
53 Field Notes, II, October 30-November 8, 1931, Folder 18, Cartoon 1, Paul Schuster Taylor Papers, BANC MSS 84/38 c, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (Hereafter, PSTP, Bancroft, University of California, Berkeley).

officer instructed them to speak Spanish. The cop even threatened to put them in the "can" if they continued to speak English. Even with this threat, the cop was unsuccessful in policing repatriates' use of language. "Shucks," one of the young repatriates told James Gilbert, "we walk past him about every day talking English and he hasn't said a word."[54]

While clothing alone was not always a good indicator of whether a resident had migrated, young repatriates expressed distain and curiosity for the local attire. Pointing to a campesino's sandals and the traditional white pants, a repatriate told James Gilbert that he would "never wear that outfit. I wear overalls."[55] Theresa Martínez Southard, dubbed "la norteña" by Mexicans, found huaraches, big hats, and the white pants, common in many rural villages, humorous.[56] In fact, she referred to the latter as "pajamas." Repatriates' clothing could stand in stark contrast to local fashion, particularly in smaller towns and villages. The "American ways" of one young repatriate in Penjamo, according to James Gilbert, contrasted with the dresses and dark colored "rebozos" worn by the majority of women.[57] "La norteña" provides another example. She wore baseball caps, walked around in high heels, and adorned her lips with lipstick. Unlike Theresa, a young repatriate from Chicago did not feel comfortable standing out and decided not to wear any of the three suits that he brought back to his parents' local village.[58]

Gender norms and practices, perhaps to a greater degree than language and clothing, structured young repatriates' behavior and time. This was particularly important for repatriates who arrived to rural areas or small towns. Expressing her dislike for Penjamo, the wife of a repatriate asked James Gilbert, "Don't you think it looks funny to see a grown man standing beside

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54 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico" 153.
55 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico," 48.
56 Theresa Martínez Southard, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 1, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
57 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."
58 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."

a barred window talking to someone on the other side, like a cat and a mouse?" This "cat" and "mouse" dynamic was part of a set of rituals that structured male and female relationships. A young woman in Guadalajara compared her relationship with boys in Mexico and the United States. She noted that in the United States girls were able to talk with boys and have them visit one's house. They boys, in Mexico, she claimed, "seem sullen." Regardless of these boys' attitudes and disposition, she was not allowed to go "out with them alone."[59] Two young women from Kansas expressed similar frustration in regards to their restricted mobility. Born in Mexico, but raised in the United States, the twenty and eighteen-year old were accustomed to socializing with their peers. In Mexico, one of them complained, "I never go to dances here. You can't go out with boys. If you do, everyone starts talking, and you are regarded as a lost person. They won't have anything to do with you."[60] Even if a young woman managed to find space and time away from their parents and other adult figures to socialize with young men, it was difficult for them to act on their emotions. Remembering her time in Mexico, Theresa fondly recalled one such meeting. During a picnic with the "gang," her friends introduced her to Joe. Theresa nostalgically recalled how Joe fell for her. She returned this sentiment: "I used to like him because he looked very nice in his dressy clothes." While they danced at the picnic, they did not continue to see each other. He lived on another ranch and her father did not let her go out. Male repatriates were also bothered by their counterparts' restricted mobility.[61] However, rather than a criticism of gender practices, they were upset by how these norms negatively impacted their own liberties.[62]

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59 Field Notes, III, November-December, 1931, Folder 19, Cartoon 1, PSTP, Bancroft, University of California, Berkeley.
60 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico," 142.
61 My reading of gender norms and relationships between repatriates and Mexicans is structured by the limits of the archive. While it is difficult to know the extent of queer relationships among repatriates, the production of primary sources is likely shaped by ethnographers and oral historian's heteronormative assumptions.
62 Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."

For many young men, earning a wage allowed them to contribute to their family's income and provided them with some spending money. Thus, labor was often linked to leisure and pleasure. Youth, especially those who ended up in small villages and towns, consistently expressed frustration with the lack of work. For example, a repatriate from Los Angeles fondly remembered how he lined his pockets with "some money" by selling newspapers and shining shoes. In Penjamo, however, his family was always "broke." Another repatriate associated the absence of labor with his own productivity: "I'm just wasting my time here."[63] Repatriates also struggled with the type of labor. Mocking the labor performed in Penjamo, one repatriate told James Gilbert that there was "nothing but donkeys around here." A young man from California found himself tending to his parents' small plot of land as well as the fields of others in Purépero, Michoacán, a small town of 6,000 people in the early 1930s. Working in the field was not only poorly paid, but arduous work. He worked from "dawn to dark," but only made fifty cents a week. Before relocating to Mexico, he worked on a Japanese farm driving a tractor. While he was in Mexico, his cousin informed him that his former boss was willing to employ him.[64] From this vantage point, one can understand how frustrating it could be to labor and live in Mexico.

In their narratives of arrival and settlement, repatriates also described Mexico as a fun and exciting place that offered new experiences and adventures. Theresa, who missed her home in the United States, recalled how much fun she had at the town's local dances. A former leader of the Casa Blanca neighborhood in Riverside, California, her father continued to be a prominent member of his community. In Mexico, he organized dances to celebrate people's birthdays. These parties began at nine at night and continued until the following morning.[65] For Enrique Vega, relocating

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[63] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico," 70.
[64] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."
[65] Theresa Martínez Southard, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 1, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.

to Zacatecas was "…the greatest thing…to me it was like such a great adventure." In 1932, a group composed of ten people, most likely the immediate family along with a few relatives, packed a Chevrolet car and Dodge truck with their belongings and headed south. Approximately eighteen years old at the time, Enrique recalled being excited. His interview is particularly interesting in light of the interviewer's bias, which mirrors assumptions found in the secondary literature.[66] For example, instead of asking an open ended question about his time in Mexico, the interviewer frames her question as a statement: "how hard was it to adjust to life over there? It's entirely different." In his responses, Enrique challenged the interview's assumptions about repatriation. He noted that he adjusted well to Mexico and that they were indeed hungry at times, but that people in the United States were also hungry. When they arrived to the Zacatecas countryside, the family obtained a ranch to farm and raise cattle. Enrique enjoyed riding horseback, mounting cattle, and learning to use a rope. For one young man from Kansas, Mexico's landscape offered freedom from racism. In Kansas, he told James Gilbert, "they don't allow Mexican people in restaurants, and in the movies they have to sit in a certain section." "Here," he continued, "you go anywhere."[67]

Others found pleasure in Mexico's growing cities. In July 1938, José Miguel Venegas traveled south and spent five months with his extended family. While he was not a repatriate, he provides an important example of a "Mexican American's" experiences in Mexico. From Mexico, this young man wrote to his parents and siblings in Los Angeles. During his time in Mexico he stayed at his grandparent's house in Zapotlanejo, Jalisco and visited his uncles and aunts in the city of Guadalajara. In early September, he headed to Mexico City to participate in "el grito de independencia" and in a religious procession to the "Basilica." According to José Miguel, the parade included about 3,000 people chanting "viva a la virgen morenita" and "viva a cristo rey,"

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[66] Enrique Vega, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 3, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
[67] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico," 68.

albeit in an orderly fashion. The parade left a particularly strong impression on him. "If you would have seen all the enthusiasm that was manifested in all the acts of the gathering, there were times of immense happiness and at the same time sentiments that almost made me cry," he wrote to his father. On their journey back to Guadalajara, they stopped at la Isla de Janitzio del Lago de Patzcuaro in Michoacán to see the recently erected monument for José María Morelos, a prominent figure of Mexico's independence.[68] The adventure continued upon his arrival. He jokingly informed his father that he was not drinking a lot of water and that surely he was exempt from the negative affects of drinking alcohol.[69] Through these correspondences we also learn that he had a girlfriend, which, according to a young and boastful José Miguel, was unavoidable.

Among repatriated youth, the sense of discovery was perhaps the greatest for the young musician Eduardo Guerrero. Born in Arizona in 1916, he became one of the most celebrated Chicano musicians of the twentieth century. His family migrated to the United States during the Mexican revolution and returned to Mexico in 1934 as a result of the Great Depression. The Guerrero family boarded a railroad train and headed to Mexico City, where they resided in an apartment in a "vecindad" that housed extended kin. As a senior in high school, "Lalo" found himself "homesick all the time" and "wanted to go home so bad." He missed his friends as well as his girlfriend Emma. Yet, he described Mexico City as a "beautiful metropolis with wide boulevards, parks, and statues everywhere." The city also offered "a whole new world of music," one that was more "beautiful" than the Mexican music being composed and consumed in Arizona. As various historians of Mexico have noted, cultural production expanded tremendously after the Mexican Revolution. The early-to-mid twentieth century witnessed the arrival of radio, the growth and expansion radio stations in Mexico City as well as along the U.S.-Mexico border, and the

[68] José Miguel to Miguel Venegas, September 22, 1938, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
[69] José Miguel to Miguel Venegas, November 4, 1938, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.

transformation of radio receivers from a luxury to a common household item. By 1940, Mexico City was home to 43 radio stations.[70] It was through the Mexican airwaves that the young repatriate from Arizona was exposed to icons like Pedro Vargas, Jorge Negrete, Pedro Infante, Consuelo Velásquez, and Agustín Lara. He also encountered music in the neighborhood and in the the city's streets. He played music with his cousin Danny and learned from "three old men who used to go from house to house begging for coins."[71] He eagerly absorbed this cultural scene and transcribed songs he heard into in his notebook.

Place, gender, and time help us explain and situate repatriates' diverse experiences in and narratives of Mexico. James Gilbert attributed young repatriates' maladjustment to migrating from "a metropolitan American culture to a rural or small town Mexican culture." U.S.-born repatriates and youth raised in larger cities in the United States often found the small cities of their parents wanting. "My father bought a farm about sixty miles from here," a repatriate told James Gilbert in Guadalajara. "I [have] been there," he continued, "but the town is too small, I like it better here." Another preferred the "bigger town" of Guadalajara to Zacatecas. A repatriate born in Arizona described Purépero, Michoacán as "dead." After two years of living in Mexico he planned to return to California. "There is absolutely nothing to do here," a married woman noted of Etúcaro, Michoacán. Gilbert found that repatriates in Mexico City, Monterrey, Torreon, Leon, Guanajuato, Guadalajara, and Mazatlan had an easier time adjusting to their new homes. It is clear that place shaped Mexicans' ideas and sentiment towards their new homes.

As a gendered experience, young men and women experienced Mexico in distinct ways. For some, housing and material conditions made the transition hard. Many were used to running

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70 Sonia Robles, "Shaping *México Lindo*: Radio, music, and gender in Greater Mexico, 1923-1946" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2012)

71 Edward Guerrero and Sherilyn Meece Mentes, *Lalo: My Life and Music* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2002), 55.

water, stoves, and other modern appliances to facilitate household labor. In addition, they experienced rigid gender norms. Young women consistently complained about their restricted mobility. Young mens' narratives of adventure and discovery were often directly related to their male privilege.[72]

Regardless of how repatriates experienced place and gender, it is important to consider time. After a few weeks, one repatriate reflected, "One begins to make friends and acquaintances, and becomes better known." "Then," he continued, "he is treated like the rest by all."[73] Repatriates might have struggled with Spanish, but it is clear that their ability to speak, write, and read in Spanish improved with the passage of time. After a few months of living in Mexico, a nine-year old María Teresa Venegas explained to her brother in a letter that she "could not write because I did not know how to in Spanish, but now I can because I am going to Catholic school and I am studying Spanish. I know how to read and write. I think we are going to stay in Mexico and I am very eager to see you guys."[74] In 1944, after spending ten years in Mexico, Emilia Castañeda returned to Los Angeles. Instead of Spanish, she now took English classes to ease her transition. On top of that, the "food didn't agree" with her and "the multitude of people…in the big city of Los Angeles…[made] [her] sick."[75]

Extending our temporal framework also reveals the ways in which living in Mexico impacted repatriates' sense of identity. While the Guerrero family returned to Arizona just three months after their arrival, these months proved to be important for the young musician. "My music," he wrote in his 2002 biography, "would never be the same."[76] While he noted that he was

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[72] For a contemporary exploration of gender and travel among migrant children see Robert C Smith, *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of new Immigrants* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
[73] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico," 150.
[74] María Teresa to Ricardo Venegas, October 4, 1940, Box 16, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
[75] Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, February 24 and March 9, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
[76] Guerrero and Mentes, *Lalo* 56

often viewed as a "pocho,"[77] and had a difficult time entering the Mexico's music industry, Mexico City proved to be a source of inspiration and a link to Mexican music and audiences.[78] The famous Mexican singer Lucha Reyes recorded and popularized his song "Canción mexicana," which is a homage to Mexican music. In the early 1960s, he became the voice of the "Las Tres Ardillitas," Spanish speaking and singing squirrels.[79] Like Lalo Guerrero, María Teresa, the youngest child in the Venegas family, found inspiration in Mexico. In the mid 1970s, she returned to Zapotlanejo, her parents' hometown and her home from 1940 to 1942, to conduct ethnographic research for her UCLA doctoral dissertation, "Local Legends in a Changing Society." María Teresa would go onto to classify, organize, and donate her family's correspondence, one of the only archival collections of Mexican migrant family letters. Enrique Vega desired to make Mexico his home. In an interview conducted in the United States in the early 1970s, Enrique Vega reflected on retirement. While his children wanted to stay in the United States, Vega planned to live transnationally, "When I retire I'm going to…commute between this country and Mexico...I have my home here, I have my home over there so."[80] Lastly, repatriation resulted in the creation of new families. "La norteña," Joseph Orozco, Francisco Castañeda, Enrique Vega, and Eduardo Venegas all got married in Mexico. With the exception of Joseph, they all had and raised Mexican-born children.

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[77] While the origins of the word are not clear, "pocho" was a derogatory term used to refer to migrant children's cultural practices, most notably their inability to speak Spanish. It connotes "Americanization" and distance from Mexican identity.

[78] See interview with Lalo Guerrero, transcribed by Dan Guerrero, Box 14, Lalo Guerrero Collection, 24, California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, Department of Special Collections, Davidson Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.

[79] Guerrero and Mentes, *Lalo*.

[80] Enrique Vega, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 3, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California. Scholars are now beginning to examine retirement among Mexican migrants. See Sarah Lynn Lopez, *The Remittance Landscape: Spaces of Migration in Rural Mexico and Urban USA (*Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

Collectively, these narratives illustrate that there was not a uniform or singular experience of repatriation. Their time in Mexico was marked by intimacy and distance as well as cultural conflict and learning. Some stayed for a few months and others spent a decade in their new homes. In short, Mexico was not simply a "foreign place." More importantly, if we only examine repatriates' adjustment to Mexico we minimize the roles they played within their families. As individuals with connections to both the United States and Mexico, migrant children played important roles during the Great Depression.

Labor in the United States

In the United States, migrant children helped their parents by caring for the younger siblings and contributing to the family's income. José Miguel Venegas' letters to his uncles and aunts in Mexico from January 1928 to August 1931 reveal his role as the oldest sibling as well as his labor during the Great Depression. In the mornings he was in charge of getting his siblings ready for school, making his bed, and sweeping. When he was not in school and his mother was working in the family store, he watched over his younger siblings, which included washing their "little diapers." The Venegas family took these quotidian tasks very seriously. Writing from Mexico, Francisco asked his nephew to view his role as an older brother as a grace from God and not as a burden. This labor, according to his uncle, would impart José Miguel, at a very young age, with a strong and serious character, "clear conscience," and a noble and generous heart. These virtues, according to Francisco, would enable him to triumph over life's challenges. The uncle also asked José Miguel to deposit in the "tender hearts" of his siblings "the fear of God" and to make them understand the "sacred obligation" that they have to their parents. To make his point clear, he told José Miguel to think of the love that a mother has for her children, a love comparable to

the love of Jesus Christ. According to Francisco, Jesus Christ died on the cross as mothers die for their children.[81]

In 1931, José Miguel, who was eleven years old, and Richard, the second oldest, began contributing to the family's income. They opened a savings account and accumulated thirty-two dollars and five cents and twenty dollars and five cents respectively. They earned this money by helping their father around the house. The savings, José Miguel informed one of his uncles, would go towards the purchase of a Ford coach car or tickets on the Pullman train.[82] As 1931 progressed José Miguel's efforts to save his allowance did not suffice. While teaching their son the value of money remained important, they needed extra income. By selling newspapers he was able to add three dollars and fifty cents to the family's weekly earnings.[83] This labor reflected a larger, more significant contribution: a positive disposition towards returning to Mexico. For example, José Miguel expressed frustration with what he believed was his parents' indecision. In a letter to his uncle he lamented that they only talked of going back to Mexico and that time passed like "water."

The Vega boys provide another important example. The Vega family left Zacatecas during the turmoil of the Mexican Revolution and settled east of the Los Angeles River in the growing Mexican neighborhood of Boyle Heights. When the father of this family passed away, the oldest boy became in charge of financially supporting the mother, a younger brother and at least one sister. Enrique, the younger brother, attended school while his brother worked in construction. During the summers, Enrique helped the family by picking tomatoes, apricots, and other fruits and vegetables in fields in Santa Paula, Fillmore, Oxnard, and "other places." As Vicki Ruiz's work and Manuel Gamio's ethnography demonstrate, working in the fields during the summer was a

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81 Francisco to José Miguel Venegas, June 4, 1931, Box 2, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
82 José Miguel to Ignacio Venegas, March 23, 1931, Box 2, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
83 José Miguel to Ignacio Venegas, March 23, 1931, Box 2, VFP, Los Angeles, California.

common experiencing among migrant children.[84] During the Great Depression, however, Enrique's older brother got married and became in charge of supporting his new family. Without a father or older sibling, Enrique was forced to take on a more active role. He dropped out of Lincoln High School and found work as a gardener in Hollywood and Beverly Hills, where he earned about three dollars and fifty cents per day.[85]

In addition to caring for their younger siblings and earning an income, migrant children often provided key links between Mexican and American cultural practices, people, and institutions. While María Bustos Jefferson did not return to Mexico, she was a participant in the repatriation process. María was born in the early 1910s in San Nicolas Ybarra, Jalisco. Like many migrants during the early twentieth century, her family left Mexico during the Mexican Revolution. Her father joined countless Mexicans who toiled for railroad companies until he became the employee of Mr. Givanisaro, a wealthy Italian who lived in Ventura, California.

In Ventura, Mrs. Bustos took an active role in her daughter's education. From an early age, she taught María to read and write in Spanish. She entered elementary school with limited English language skills, but quickly picked it up as a result of her Spanish comprehension. In high school, Mrs. Bustos reviewed María's work and consistently inquired about her grades. María recalled that her mother "correct[ed] anything that was wrong, even the Mexican history, anything." In addition to excelling in school, this young girl was an excellent singer and sang "for all the service clubs," which were made up of prominent white community members. She graduated high school

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[84] Vicki Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (University of New Mexico Press: 1987).
[85] Enrique Vega, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 3, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California Los Angeles, California.

in 1929 and with financial support from the "Lions, Kiwanis, Rotary, and Women's Clubs" attended Occidental College in Los Angeles, California.[86]

At Occidental College María majored in music and focused on Latin American and Mexican traditions as well as Opera. María's Mexican background, talents as a singer, and position as a university student provided her an opportunity to become involved with the repatriation process in Los Angeles. During a meeting hosted by the Cosmopolitan Club, Dr. Allen Hunter spoke to students about the repatriation of Mexicans and asked them to consider how they might provide repatriates with positive disposition towards Americans. María and a group of students responded to Dr. Hunter's invitation to get involved by organizing a committee. After speaking with the Mexican consul, the students decided to donate food and clothing to returning Mexicans. She became invested in this cause and took on a leadership role. This young Mexican college student spoke to the student body at Occidental College and raised funds by visiting churches in the Los Angeles area. María would read a passage from the bible and speak "about the contributions of the Mexican people to this country, and our need to see that these people would return with good feelings." She followed her brief message with a few songs and pleas for donations. She was particularly moved by her visit to an African-American Baptist church in Pasadena, California. As with visits to other churches, she emphasized Mexicans' contribution to the United States, their imminent return, and their need for assistance. At the Pasadena church, the African-American congregation responded to her narration with numerous "amens" and an outpouring of emotion. This Mexican college student and children of migrants understood African-Americans' emotional response to Mexican migrants' plight as the result of a shared experience

[86] María Bustos Jefferson, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 11, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California Los Angeles, California.

of suffering and struggle in the United States. This was her first encounter with this ethnic community, one that she described as "beautiful, just beautiful."[87]

María and her fellow students used the funds collected at church services to buy fruit, eggs, and ingredients to make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. María and her classmates then placed these goods in baskets and delivered them to families departing from the Southern Pacific Railroad. As Mexicans departed, María implored them to be happy about returning to their mother country. Speaking as an American, she told them that "we were grateful they had come to help, to build this country. To build the roads and railroads and that we were grateful. When I said we, I told them I spoke for many, many hundreds of people."[88] The Occidental music student concluded her visit to the train station by singing "Las Golondrinas" (The Swallows), a Mexican classic and heartfelt song about migrating. The verse, for example, tells the story of a swallow who is lost and far from his home.

> "Where will it go, fast and tired?
> The swallow that is leaving here?
> Or if in the wind it finds itself lost
> Looking for shelter and it won't find it.
> Next to my bed I will make his nest
> Where he can pass the season
> I am also lost in this region
> O heavenly saints and I can't fly![89]

Since this song is as much about leaving one's home as it is about finding a new one, it seems fitting that it was sung to Mexicans who returned to their homelands under complicated circumstances. "We were hopeful," María reflected on her involvement with repatriation, "that

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[87] María Bustos Jefferson, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 11, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
[88] María Bustos Jefferson, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 11, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.
[89] John Nieto and Bob Phillips, *Mariachi Philharmonic: Mariachi in the Traditional String Orchestra*, (Alfred Music: 2005).

they would take with them good memories and with many good things that they had learned here, so that Mexico would progress more."[90] "Good will" and "economic progress" via returned migrants was not an uncommon position at the time and in many ways reflects the official rhetoric of U.S. and Mexican officials, especially intellectuals like Manuel Gamio.[91] María's story illustrates how migrant children engaged repatriation and thought about migrants' place in both the U.S. and Mexican nation.

In other instances, migrant children were instrumental in allowing the family to split up and sustain homes in both Mexico and the United States. In the spring of 1932, for example, Miguel Venegas took a quick trip to Zapotlanejo to evaluate local conditions, but decided against returning to Mexico.[92] Eight years later, Miguel, Dolores, and their children Eduardo, Juan José, María Teresa, Alfonso, and a one-year old Enrique, departed for the Mexican state of Jalisco. The three oldest boys, José Miguel, Ricardo, and Guillermo, stayed in Los Angeles and ran the family's grocery store. In Guadalajara, and with Francisco's help, Miguel opened and operated a "cristalería" (glassware shop).[93] By strategically splitting up, the Venegas family ran two businesses and two homes. In Guadalajara, the children attended school and Dolores ran the household and watched Enrique. While the children adjusted well to life in Mexico, the glassware store in Guadalajara was not profitable and the boys mismanaged the grocery store in Los Angeles. The family eventually returned to their home in the summer of 1942. While this was technically a

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90 María Bustos Jefferson, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 11, 1971, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California Los Angeles, California.

91 After the Mexican Revolution, prominent intellectuals viewed migration as a threat to the peace and prosperity of the nation. Focusing on Manuel Gamio, Casey Walsh illustrates that the repatriation of Mexican migrants was viewed a way to modernize Mexico. Gamio and other intellectuals believed that migrants learned industrial work discipline and production techniques in the United States. Following this logic, repatriation would benefit both migrants and Mexico. See Casey Walsh "Eugenic Acculturation: Manuel Gamio, Migration Studies, and the Anthropology of Development in Mexico, 1910-1940" *Latin American Perspectives* 31, No. 5 (September 2004).

92 Miguel to Juan Venegas, April 22, 1932, Box 1, VFP, Los Angeles, California.

93 Personal communication with Carlos and María Teresa Venegas, January, 26, 2015.

failed business venture, the labor of the three oldest boys enabled the family to return to Los Angeles.[94]

Family members in the United States were also instrumental in aiding repatriates who desired to return. They often provide relatives in Mexico with important documents as well as financial assistance to aid their journey north. When Emilia Castañeda decided to return to Los Angeles, her godmother mailed funds to cover her transportation and a copy of this young repatriate's birth certificate. In Mexico, Emilia secured a few more essential items. From the Gallardo family, whom she worked for one year as a live in domestic, she obtained a notarized letter stating that they had employed her and that she was a "nice girl." From Aurelia Meraz, an extended relative, she borrowed a brown habit of La Virgen del Carmen. Armed with a notarized letter, birth certificate, and spiritual protection, Emilia made her journey back to Los Angeles in 1944. Shortly after arriving to Los Angeles, she mailed Francisco his birth certificate, which facilitated his eventual return to the United States in 1951.[95] This process and strategy is explored in more details in chapter five.

In Mexico

While repatriates born or raised in the United States could at times feel disconnected or out of place in Mexico, they brought a set of skills to their new environments. Three high school graduates from Los Angeles found work in Aguascalientes fixing radios and other electrical devices. As historians of Mexico and the United States demonstrate, the radio was an emerging technology of mass communication in the 1930s, one utilized by both President Lázaro Cárdenas and FDR to connect citizens to the state. It was in this decade that the radio became a household

[94] Personal communication with Carlos and María Teresa Venegas, January, 26, 2015.
[95] Emilia Castañeda de Valenciana, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, February 24 and March 9, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.

item.[96] Reflecting on finding work in Mexico, one of the repatriates noted that in the United States everyone knew "a little bit about electrical work, radios, and all that, but they don't here." "They think," he said, "it's wonderful, this simple wiring and putting up [an] antennae." A repatriate from Chicago also found work as a result of his technical expertise. In Monterrey, as he had in the United States, he worked as an electrician in a movie theater.[97]

Joseph G. Orozco, Enrique Vega, and Eduardo Venegas found work as a result of their English language skills and ability to move between Mexican and American institutions and people. Joseph G. Orozco migrated to the United States with his father and mother at a very young age. His father was a lieutenant colonel in the Mexican federal army and appears to have migrated during the Mexican Revolution. In the United States, Orozco's father worked for a copper company before joining the aviation corps as an instructor during WWI. Sadly, his father died in a plane accident. In 1920, Orozco and his mother moved to Berkeley and resided on Fulton Street. Orozco attended William McKinley Grammar School and graduated from Berkeley Senior High School, where he played volleyball, basketball, and table tennis.

Orozco's mother wished for her son to attend a university and saved $3,800 for that purpose. Unfortunately, her son's graduation in 1930 coincided with the Great Depression, and she was only able to recover $380, or ten percent, from the bank. This did not seem to bother Joseph too much as he went to Mexico City to visit friends and family. Once in Mexico, however, he had trouble entering the United States. When he went to the U.S. Embassy to notify them that he was in Mexico, officials informed him that he was born in Mexico and was a thus Mexican and not a U.S. citizen. They notified him that it would take some time for them to get him back to the

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[96] Sonia Robles, "Shaping *México Lindo*: Radio, music, and gender in Greater Mexico, 1923-1946" (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 2012), Joy Elizabeth Hayes, *Radio Nation: Communication, Popular Culture, and Nationalism in Mexico, 1920-1940* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000).
[97] Gilbert, "A Field Study in Mexico."

U.S. In the meantime, this recent high school graduate and children of migrants traveled throughout Mexico and worked for numerous American companies and socialized with Mexicans and Americans.

Joseph worked in a number of jobs. He worked at a sulfur plant in Morelos and for Brunswick de Mexico, which constructed bowling alleys and sold bowling equipment. At Avis Chambers of Mexico, he supervised purchasing orders. In these three jobs, his ability to speak, read, and write in English were likely an advantage. His ability to move between English and Spanish and serve as an intermediary between Americans and Mexicans was his most important asset and helped him secure employment. At the Mexico City News Office, the "all-American, all-English" newspaper, he worked as a translator. For the district attorney, he helped the Mexican police and American tourists communicate with each other. In one case, he was a "witness" to a domestic abuse incident. Joseph also took part in large-scale bi-national projects. In Veracruz, he worked for "la comision para la erradicación de la fiebre aftosa," for the Hoof and Mouth Disease Commission in Oaxaca, for the United States Railway Mission in 1944. In all three, he facilitated communication between American professionals and Mexican workers. For the railroad project, for example, he was in charge of translating orders from American bosses, often engineers, to Mexican laborers.

Enrique Vega, the young man who arrived and enjoyed living in Zacatecas found similar type of employment. In 1941, approximately nine years after arriving to Mexico, Enrique traveled to Mexico City. In the mid 1940s, he was employed by the American government and later by the Mexican government to work on the Hoof and Mouth program.[98]

[98] Enrique Vega, interviewed by Christine Valenciana, September 3, 1972, MACHP, CSUF, Fullerton, California.

In addition to English, Eduardo Venegas used business skills acquired from working in his family's grocery store in Los Angeles to supported his new family. Eduardo migrated and settled in Mexico in 1944, where he got married and had five children. In Los Angeles, at the family-run Venegas store, he was exposed to the buying and selling of goods, which required careful observation of the market, book keeping, and developing strong relationships with clients. All of these things proved instrumental to running the shoe section of his uncle Francisco's department store in Guadalajara. Mirroring his father's initiative, he looked into other ways of making money. In August of 1949, he took courses at U.S. consulate in Guadalajara in order to become an English teacher. By teaching English, Eduardo could earn ten dollars per hour. Raised in Los Angeles, Eduardo was likely more proficient in English than most Guadalajara residents. He planned to work half day as a teacher and the other half doing wholesale. "I want to do both in case one fails," he wrote to his father Miguel.[99] Just a few months after Eduardo wrote to Miguel the prospect of failure was on the horizon. "Here," Eduardo informed his father, "things have gotten a little ugly, well since about three months, the question of the shoe has been a bit difficult…its hard to find leather, because a Mr. Pasque is exporting all of it to the United States and the little that remains here is very bad and expensive."[100] Eduardo was unable to meet his customers' demands and his sales were cut in half. Fortunately, he was earning approximately $325-a-month teaching English classes. While Eduardo anticipated that things would improve in two-to-three months, his English language skills were key to his family's sustenance.

Like these men, young women benefited from knowing English. After living in San Luis Potosí for more than a decade, the U.S.-born repatriate Esperanza Martínez worked as translator

[99] Eduardo to Miguel Venegas, August 11, 1949, Box 2, VFP, Los Angeles, California.
[100] Eduardo to Miguel Venegas, February 6, 1950, Box 2, VFP, Los Angeles, California.

for the governor of San Luis Potosí Gonzalo N. Santos (1943-1949).[101] Emilia Castañeda and Theresa Martínez found more informal work, but also used English in their new settings. The Castañeda and Martínez families placed their daughters in the homes of friends, families, and acquaintances. As Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo has shown for the contemporary period, domestic work often placed woman in vulnerable positions, but it also provided them with housing.[102] Since the Castañeda family struggled to establish a home, domestic work was a good option. As a twelve-year-old, Emilia worked as a babysitter for Jesus Aranda, the owner of an automobile repair shop. In addition to caring for the Aranda children, Emilia translated letters from English to Spanish for Mr. Aranda. In her teens, Emilia worked as a live in nanny with extended kin as well as other Mexicans, while her brother and father traveled the countryside looking for work. Lola, an extended family member, got her a job working for the Valdez family, who owned a dairy farm. She sang and spoke English with the oldest daughters. According to Emilia, children of middle class families were much more likely to know English and less likely to frown upon repatriates who spoke it. The very large Martínez family left the United States on August 3, 1931 and settled with relatives in Torreón. In an effort to maximize their limited resources, the Martínez father sent Theresa to work and live on a ranch with a wealthy family. Like Emilia, she sang to the children in English.

Conclusion

While families made up a large proportion of the total number of repatriates, historians of repatriation have not examined how families worked during the Great Depression. This chapter demonstrates that families were central to the entire process. From Mexico, relatives provided

[101] Enciso, "Regreso a casa."
[102] See Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadow of Affluence* (University of California Press: Berkeley, Los Angeles, 2001).

future repatriates with advice and helped them decide whether to return to Mexico or stay in the United States. Through correspondence, the Venegas family explored repatriation in the early 1930s and again in 1939. Once repatriates arrived to Mexico, they received material support from siblings, parents, and extended family. While the U.S. and Mexican state funded the transportations of Mexicans, it was ultimately the family that provided the necessary infrastructure to integrate repatriates into their new environments.

As part of migrant families, migrant children born in the United States accounted for at least forty percent of the total number of Mexicans who returned to Mexico from 1929 to 1934. Rather than emphasize their difficult adjustment to Mexico, this chapter pays careful attention to their diverse experiences and emphasizes their affinity and distance to Mexico. By revisiting their time in Mexico I demonstrate that previous portraits are inadequate and tell us very little about their actual role during the Great Depression. As individuals with ties to both Mexico and the United States, migrant children played an important role in both Mexico and the United States. In both countries they found work. The labor of the Venegas children, I demonstrate, enabled the family to operate two homes and two businesses. In short, migrant children were part of migrant families' transnational strategies. The following chapter examines migrant children's efforts to return to the United States. It explores the relationship between the transnational family, the agency of repatriates, and U.S. citizenship.

Chapter 5

Returning to the United States: Repatriates, the Family, and the State

From March 1931 to April 1934, Los Angeles County provided 13,332 Mexicans with free passage to the border.[1] This was part of an effort by U.S. and Mexican officials to repatriate Mexicans to their hometowns or destination of their choosing. Organizations in the United States provided Mexicans with transportation to the border and the Mexican government furnished passage the rest of the way. In August 1931, George P. Clements of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce observed Mexican families departing for Mexico from the Southern Pacific Depot. In an interdepartmental memo, he expressed some serious misgivings about the process. Mexicans, according to Clements, were "…told that they could come back whenever they wanted to." "I think this is a grave mistake" he wrote to Mr. Arnoll, "because it is not the truth." Individuals who boarded a train and received a free ride to the border were given a "departure card," which bore a "Los Angeles County Department of Charities" stamp and the signature of one of its officials. Instead of evidence of residency in the United States, the "departure card" indicated that its holder had received charity, which made "it impossible for any of the Mexican born to return." A provision in immigration law barred those who were "likely to become a public charge." This entire process also hindered the potential return of U.S. citizens. Clements estimated that U.S.-born Mexicans accounted for roughly sixty percent of the approximately one-thousand four hundred passengers that departed on that August day in 1931. Even though they were citizens, the burden of proof was placed, according to Clements, "entirely on the individual."[2]

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[1] Yuki Oda, "Family Unity in U.S. Immigration Policy, 1921-1978" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014), 139.
[2] Mr. Clements to Mr. Arnoll, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, August 17, 1931, Box 62, George Pigeon Clements Papers, 1825-1945 (Collection 118), UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, Los Angeles, California.

Clements' memo poignantly documents U.S. officials' deliberate and underhanded attempt to permanently ban all Mexicans who rode in one of the many trains headed back to Mexico. Reports by U.S. officials on both sides of the border demonstrate that there were other ways in which government officials attempted to prohibit the re-entry of Mexican nationals and U.S. citizens. For a 1933 report about the border, Geo L. Coleman spoke with Mexican and American consular and immigration officials, lawyers, social workers, and individuals associated with organizations like the Chamber of Commerce. The Mexican consul at Los Angeles, Alejandro V. Martinez, informed Coleman that "the papers and documents of those being repatriated were take[n] away from them at the border, some of which might be of value for their returning at some future date, legally." This claim was confirmed, according to Coleman, "by our San Diego office."[3] In addition to taking documents away from repatriates, officials along the border neglected to record Mexicans' entry into the United States. U.S.-born Mexicans who crossed into Mexico requested to be registered at immigration offices in order to facilitate their return into the United States. Not surprisingly, inspectors often refused and offered to examine them upon return. In one instance, according to the American Vice Consul Powell, the immigration officers flippantly told one Mexican to "go over and find out when you return." In a letter to the Secretary of State, the American consul at Nuevo Laredo confirmed immigration authorities' willful neglect and noted the implications for migrants who entered the United States legally: "Those legal entrants who do not register their departure with the American immigration authorities are unable to reenter without

[3] Geo L. Coleman to Commissioner, Immigration, and Naturalization Service, "Re: Mexican Border problems," September 16, 1933, "Mexican Americans living in Texas," 55877/443, Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, Record Group 85, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

visas within six months as they have no acceptable proof to claim reentry..."[4] In short, Mexican migrant families' return to Mexico was structured to prohibit their re-entry.

American officials' efforts to deny Mexican families the right to return to the United States confirm Chicano/a and U.S. historians' characterization of repatriation as a violation of Mexicans' civil rights. As Linda C. Noel argues, repatriation was premised on Americans' discourse of Mexican migrants as temporary sojourners. Repatriation, in her view, was primarily a result of "increased incidents of racial discrimination, the omnipresent fear of being arrested and deported, threatened removal from relief rolls, and intimidation or violence…"[5] Focusing on Arizona from 1930 to 1935, Noel's history of repatriation renders Mexican migrants and U.S.-born youth as passive and helpless victims. Indeed, scholars' attention to U.S. officials' actions and discourse frames repatriation within the 1930s and produces a linear narrative of migration from the United States to Mexico. This chapter contributes to this scholarship by examining repatriates' efforts to the return to the United States and by thinking critically about the relationship between repatriates and U.S. citizenship.[6] In other words, instead of assuming that citizenship held no value for Mexicans during the Great Depression, I think of citizenship as a site of negotiation. Using archival

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[4] American Consul at Nuevo Laredo, Mexico to Secretary of State. November 26, 1930, Box 1209, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (Hereafter, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD).

[5] Linda C. Noel. *Debating American Identity: Southwestern Statehood and Mexican Immigration.* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), 146.

[6] I refer to U.S.-born Mexicans as repatriates because they were part of the repatriation movement during the Great Depression. There is a small, gut growing body of literature that offers new perspectives on repatriation. Yuki Oda examines immigration laws to show that it became increasingly difficult for U.S. citizens to pass on citizenship to their Mexican-born children. See Yuki Oda, "Family Unity in U.S. Immigration Policy, 1921-1978" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014); Marla Andre Ramírez uses oral histories to follow the efforts of three families across three generations. She uses the terms "banishment" to theorize illegality. In her view, banishment refers "to citizens who are banned from their home country." She argues that banishment resulted in a "90-year-old unofficial, later becoming official policy," which classified "direct descendants of banished U.S. citizens as 'illegal' immigrants in their parents and grandparents' home country." See "Contested Illegality: Three Generations of Exclusion through Mexican 'Repatriation' and the Politics of Immigration Law, 1920-2005" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2015).

sources from the National Archives and Administration records, this chapter focuses on two central strategies that Mexican migrant families deployed to claim citizenship and return to their homes. In the first section, I document how family members in both Mexico and the United States requested resource and aid from the U.S. government by visiting U.S. consular offices and penning letters. After analyzing the content of the letters, I outline the outcome of these petitions. The second section focuses on the actions of U.S.-born youth and children who resided along the U.S.-Mexico border. Taking advantage of their proximity to the United States, these families sent their children to live and work just north of the U.S.-Mexico border. Collectively, examining these practices helps us understand migrant-state relations, the limits and possibilities of practicing U.S. citizenship in Mexico, and the importance of transnational families.

Petitioning the State

Using records from the Secretary of State and consular offices at Guadalajara, Torreón, Chihuahua, and Mexicali, this section constructs a history of migrant requests.[7] From Mexico, U.S.-born youth, migrant parents of U.S. citizens, and U.S. citizens married to Mexican nationals, visited the consul and wrote to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the United States, siblings, parents, and grandparents wrote to U.S. officials on behalf of repatriates. From both sides of the border, Mexicans asked the government for financial assistance, help acquiring proof of U.S. citizenship, and gaining entrance into the United States. In emphasizing their financial and familial hardships, affinity to the United States, and their citizenship status, repatriates demonstrated that they were worthy of state resources. Despite their heartfelt narratives, the Secretary of State denied migrants' requests for financial assistance. While migrants did not receive the financial support

[7] I selected Guadalajara and Torreón because they are migrant-sending regions and Chihuahua and Mexicali because of their proximity to the United States. For Mexicali, I only used correspondence between consular officials. In the near future, I plan to research the records of additional consular offices in Mexico and include migrant letters and interaction with the Mexicali consul.

they desired, the U.S. government did help facilitate the movement of birth certificates and financial resources from relatives in the United States to repatriates in Mexico.

From Mexico, U.S.-born Mexicans made claims to U.S. citizenship by replicating Mexican migrant practices such as writing letters and visiting consuls. They also participated in developments specific to the New Deal and FDR's presidency. As I demonstrate in chapter two, Mexican parents and youth wrote to Mexican presidents and officials and sought assistance from Mexican consular officials. In her study of the northern Mexico borderlands during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Sonia Hernández found that peasant women petitioned both state and national authorities. Writing petitions, she argues, "survived and crossed the border along with Mexican women."[8] If migrants brought these practices to the United States, their children now deployed them in Mexico. As former residents of the United States and U.S. citizens, repatriates were also part of political changes taking place within U.S. society. While Americans wrote to the nation's first presidents, letter writing reached unprecedented heights during Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency. The cultural historian Leila Sussmann refers to this as a "revolution in political mail."[9] Roosevelt received half a million letters during his first week in office and an average of 6,500 a day in 1934.[10] Historians attribute the rise of a cohort of "plebian writers" to advent of the radio in the 1920s and 1930s, new pedagogy and increased emphasis on letter writing in elementary and junior high schools, the Great Depression, a desire to write and engage the

8 Sonia Hernández, *Working Women into the Borderlands* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 13.

9 See Jack McLaughlin, *To His Excellency Thomas Jefferson: Letters to a President* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co 1991); Harold Holzer, ed.,, *Dear Mr. Lincoln: Letters to the President* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co, 1993); Leila Sussmann, "Mass Political Letter Writing in America: The Growth of an Institution" *The Public Opinion Quarterly* Vol. 23, No. 2 (1959).

10 Paul David Husbands, "The People's President": Letter Writing, The Presidency and Popular Politics in Late-Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth-Century America" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007), 232, 234.

president.[11] New Deal programs and FDR's presidency also changed the relationship between the Federal Government and individual citizens.[12] While the New Deal did not materially benefit Mexicans in the United States, it created an opening for Mexicans to claim rights. Focusing on women in El Paso, Texas Yolanda Chávez Leyva shows that domestic workers used the National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 to justify their right to organize a union. For Leyva, these efforts were part of a larger effort by "Mexican Americans" to claim space within the U.S. nation.[13] Transnational Mexican letter-writing during the 1930s marks an unexplored history of the Great Depression, repatriation, and U.S. citizenship.[14]

Repatriates petitioned U.S. officials and presidents for a range of things, but their most common request was for funds and transportation to return to the United States. An overwhelming majority of letters were written by females: mothers and migrant daughters who were born or raised in the United States. For example, after an unsuccessful visit to the American consul in Guadalajara, Mrs. Cora J. Campos, a U.S. citizen and mother of six children informed President Franklin D. Roosevelt that "I want to go to my beloved country." "I beg you to help me if you please," she pleaded.[15] In her Spanish-language letter of April 1939, María Elena Campos de

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[11] Paul David Husbands, "The People's President": Letter Writing, The Presidency and Popular Politics in Late-Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth-Century America" (PhD diss., Duke University, 2007); Leila Sussmann, "Mass Political Letter Writing in America: The Growth of an Institution" *The Public Opinion Quaterly* Vol. 23. No. 2 (1959).

[12] Leila Sussmann, "Mass Political Letter Writing in America: The Growth of an Institution" *The Public Opinion Quaterly* Vol. 23, 2 (1959); For more on the New Deal and its impact on local politics and political participation see Mason B. Williams, *City of Ambition: FDR, La Guardia, and the Making of New York* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013) and Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); For more on letter writing and political participation see Eduardo Elena, "What the People Want: State Planning and Political Participation in Peronist Argentina, 1946-1955," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2005).

[13] Yolanda Chávez Leyva, "Faithful, Hardworking Mexican Hands: Mexicana Workers during the Great Depression," in *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies* Vol. 5. ed., Juan R. García. Tucson: The University of Arizona, Mexican American Studies and Research Center, 1995.

[14] In her work on 1930s Russia, Sheila Fitzpatrick argues that letter-writers were like "memoirists and actors," engaged in "a sort of performance." See "Supplicants and Citizens: Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930's" *Slavic Review* Vol. 55, 1 (1996), 78-105.

[15] Mrs. Cora J. Campos to President Franklin Roosevelt, June 25, 1935, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

Guzmán asked Roosevelt to assist her and her seven children to return to either Livingston or Modesto, California, cities where they had lived for eight and seven years, respectively.[16] "I pray to God every nite that we can go back soon and if you can help us please let me know soon," Evelyn Romero, a U.S. citizen and mother of seven U.S.-born girls, wrote to President Roosevelt.[17] Nicha Rodriguez, one of seven children, deployed her limited English language skills to address a letter to "Uncle Sam or President." Writing from Nochistlan, Zacatecas, she hoped that her country would assist her family in returning to Iowa.[18] For two U.S. citizens, the desire to return was so urgent that in their correspondence with government officials they proposed to return without their husbands, both of whom were Mexican nationals. A pregnant María Leona Senecal described herself as an "American woman in great distress", who wished to return "as quick as possible."[19] For three years, Marrion Terriquez wrote to charity organizations in the United States, the Secretary of State, and President Herbert Hoover and Roosevelt. "All that I want," she wrote in one of her last letters in 1934, "is my repatriation back to New York with my children if my husband cant' go, for I don't know what is going to happen to my children in this country where there is no humanity, no charity specially for the poor Americans."[20]

From the United States, family members requested financial assistance on behalf of their relatives in Mexico. Working with Isabel Lopez of San Francisco, California, Willard W. Shea, a public defender in Oakland, California, contacted the Department of State. Aurora, her thirteen year old daughter, was born in Nevada in 1920, but was living with a Miss Labra in Ocotlan,

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16 María Elena Campos de Guzmán to President Franklin Roosevelt, April 19, 1939, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
17 Evelyn Romero to President Franklin Roosevelt, March 18, 1938, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
18 Nicha Rodriguez to "Uncle Sam or President," February 5, 1936, Box 3, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, Record Group 84, Records of Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (Hereafter, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD).
19 Mrs. Leopoldo De Soto to President Roosevelt, August 1, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
20 Marrion Terriquez to Minister of Exterior Relations, January 19, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

Jalisco. Labra was willing to send the child to her mother, but like Isabel, was unable to cover the cost of transportation. Functioning as an intermediary, the public defender wrote to the Department of State to inquire if there was "any provision for the return of this child."[21] Like Isabel, Paula Chavayo wanted the government to bring her daughter to the United States. In 1933, Paula received a letter from her daughter Nettie Navarro, who was living in Ciudad García, Zacatecas with her husband and eight children. Nettie described their poor material conditions and noted that she "lost hope of going back." [22] Paula Chavayo, however, did not give up. She forwarded her daughter's letter to President Roosevelt and asked him to "help me to bring my daughter back from Mexico."[23] From New Mexico, Teodora B. Urioste wrote a letter to her senator on behalf of her daughter's children. After two years of living in León, Guanajuato, the oldest of four U.S.-born children wrote to his grandmother. She responded to her grandchildren's plight by penning a letter to her senator. "I am writing a few lines to ask a great favor of you," she wrote to Senator Bronson Cutting of New Mexico. She informed the senator of her daughter's recent death and the state of her four grandchildren. Teodora hoped that the senator would work with the Mexican consul to provide the children free passage to El Paso, Texas, where her son could then pick them up.[24]

Aware of U.S. consular officials' role in managing Mexican migration to the United States, migrants requested visas, proof of citizenship, and help with documents and travel. Composed of Mexican nationals and U.S. citizens, migrant families often needed a visa for one of their members. Wives and mothers, regularly wrote to request a visa for their husbands. Juanita Ramírez wrote to the "President of Country" from Los Herreras, Durango, Mexico, in 1937. Her husband, Jesus Rivera, she explained, was born in Mexico and migrated to the United States in 1917. They were

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21 Willard W. Shea to Department of State, September 12, 1933, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
22 Nettie Navarro to Paula Chavoya, June 28, 1933, Box 1246, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
23 Paula Chavoya to President Roosevelt, February 16, 1934, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
24 Teodora B. Urioste to Senator Cutting, February 20, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

married in Colorado, the state of her birth, in 1922 and raised four U.S.-born children. During the Great Depression, they returned to Mexico, where she gave birth to an additional child. After five years of living outside the United States, she hoped that the government would provide her husband with a passport.[25] Like Juanita, Amelia Luna Hernández was a U.S. citizen and mother of U.S.-born children, who married a Mexican national. Amelia contacted the U.S. consul at Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua to inquire about a visa for her husband.[26] Rosie García, also married a Mexican national. However, unlike Juanita and Amelia, she was born in Mexico and arrived to California when she was just three years old. After eleven years of living in the United States, she moved to Mexico, where she eventually married a "poor" man. From a ranch in Arandas, Jalisco, Rosie asked President Roosevelt to help her family, which included four U.S.-born sisters, to return to California. "All day long," she wrote to the president, "I am talking to my husband about my dear California and he says that if you help us to come over here that he will work the very best he can." "Will [you] send a passport," she asked President Roosevelt. [27]

Individuals also wrote from the United States. In her Spanish-written letter to the U.S. consul at Chihuahua, Carolina P. de Muñoz inquired about her husband's return. She hoped that he could rejoin "my company and that of his children." All six of his children, she noted, were born in New Mexico.[28] Writing from Wisconsin, Marian Orozco asked President Roosevelt to help her sister, María Barajas and her four children. She opened her letter by praising the president: "You are the best President we ever had and the only one we will ever have there was no President that did for all the poor like you did and I hope you will be our next President." María, Marian

[25] Juanita Ramírez to President Roosevelt, February 4, 1937, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[26] James C. Powell Jr., American Vice Consul, to Amelia Luna Hernández, December 17, 1937, Box 9, Chihuahua Consulate, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[27] Rosie García to "President of the U.S.," April 22, 1939, Box 1245, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[28] Carolina P. de Muñiz to "Consul Americano," April 25, 1934, Box 9, Chihuahua Consulate, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

explained, "is sick the doctor said that if she don't get away from there she will die." Unable to help the Barajas family, Marian hoped that María's husband would be allowed to return to the United States. "If they let her husband come," she wrote, "he can get work from the factory where he was working a long time ago and he can help to take care of his family."[29]

Mexican nationals were not the only ones in need of documentation. It is easy to imagine families forgetting or losing birth certificates on their arduous journey south, misplacing them as they joined relatives in crowded homes, or having them stolen by immigration officials. After just four months of residing in Torreón, Coahuila, Concepcion Ortiz mustered all of her English-language skills and addressed a letter to "My Dear Sir Mr. President." Writing on behalf of her parents and younger siblings Concepcion asked the president to "send us a note or a letter to present it in the frontera as we can return to our country."[30] Others visited the consul and inquired about obtaining birth certificates and registering.

Repatriates and their family members in the United States also hoped that the consul would provide information and facilitate the movement of documents. In an effort to secure the entry of a young U.S.-born woman into the United States, Elias Tejada of the orphanage Casa de Beneficencia asked the consul at Torreón to notify U.S. officials along the border about her impending arrival.[31] From Northern California, Pedro Escobedo hoped to obtain information from the consul at Guadalajara and for the consul to actively take a role in his siblings' migration north. "Would you be so kind," he wrote to the consul following the death of his father, "in advising my sister and brother as to how or what they have to do in order to come to their native country?" [32]

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29 Marian Orozco to President Roosevelt, July 28, 1936, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
30 Concepcion Ortiz to President Roosevelt, August 15, 1938, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
31 Nelson R. Park, Consul at Torreón, to George P. Shaw, Consul at Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, June 18, 1936, Torreón Consulate, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
32 Pedro Escobedo to the American Consul in Guadalajara, Mexico, August 6, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

Others asked consular officials to deliver documents on their behalf. Eliza Provencio de Larroque, of Santa Monica, California, mailed the consul at Torreón a series of items in hopes that the consul would give them to her sister, Cecilia Provencio de Sota.[33]

Mexicans on both sides of the border composed letters to FDR and consular officials under great duress, yet their stories were not written in haste. Letter writers carefully narrated their or their family's economic, social, and familial context.[34] Through their words, they conveyed the worthiness of their cause. Repatriates received shelter and financial assistance from relatives, but found it difficult to obtain financial stability. Writing from Guadalajara, Jalisco in June 1935, Cora J. Campos informed President Franklin D. Roosevelt that her family had resided in Mexico for approximately sixteen months. They arrived to Michoacán, her husband's hometown, and lived with his sisters for eight months. Throughout this time, he was unable to secure employment. Desperate for help, she and her six U.S.-born children went to Guadalajara, while her husband traveled Mexico in search of work. The Campos children did not attend school and Cora was forced to solicit strangers for food.[35] The Sánchez family provides another example of the challenges of earning an income. The Native American Barbara Priest Sánchez, her husband, and their U.S.-born son, migrated to Mexico when Mr. Sánchez lost his job. In Mexico, according to Thomas D. Bowman, American Consul General in Mexico City, they "made every possible effort to provide for themselves and for their child." While Barbara secured part time work as a stenographer, they

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[33] Eliza Provencio de Larroque to American Consul, Torreón. July 21, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[34] In her work on 1930s Russia, Sheila Fitzpatrick argues that letter-writers were like "memoirists and actors," engaged in "a sort of performance." See "Supplicants and Citizens: Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930's" *Slavic Review* Vol. 55, No. 1 (Spring 1996), pp. 78-105.

[35] Mrs. Cora J. Campos to President Franklyn Roosevelt, June 25, 1935, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

continued to rely on their relatives for "shelter." However, their family in Mexico could no longer house them.[36]

More fortunate repatriates found work, but struggled to remain employed. Marrion Terriquez, a graduate of the University of Rio Piedras, in San Juan Puerto Rico, and Juan Terriquez, a Mexican national, met and got married in New York City, where they had four children. [37] From 1927 to 1930, Juan worked as a metal polisher at the Soss Manufacturing Company in New York City, where he earned forty-five dollars per week. In 1930, he became unemployed and the family moved in with Marrion's sister.[38] In the summer of 1931, Marrion and Juan, and their four children, began their journey to Guadalajara. Shortly after they arrived, Juan began working at the Chapala Electric Company, where he earned 2.50 pesos per day.[39] By December of 1932 he was out of work and was forced to depend on an "odd job for a day or so."[40] Despite her experience as a school teacher and knowledge of English and Spanish, Marrion was unable to find work. The Mexican government, she claimed in a letter to President Roosevelt, would not offer her a job as a teacher because she was an American.[41]

In their letters to presidents and visits to consular offices, mothers and daughters explained the negative impact of the unplanned reconfiguration of their families. In doing so, they appealed to the gender politics of the New Deal's social welfare programs, which provided aid to women

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[36] Thomas D. Bowman, American Consul General, to Secretary of State, September 19, 1933, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[37] Marrion Terriquez to Mr. Harry N. Hirsch, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Social Welfare, September 5, 1934, (date on document, likely written earlier), Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[38] American Consulate, Guadalajara, to Secretary of State, August 20, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[39] Raleigh A. Gibson, American Consul at Guadalajara to Secretary of State, April 4, 1932, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[40] American Consulate, Guadalajara, to Secretary of State, August 20, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[41] Marrion Terriquez to President Roosevelt, November 1, 1933, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

and children separated from husbands and fathers by death and economic hardship.[42] Victoria Modesta Ramírez and Evelyn Romero, for example, ended up alone, without their husbands after repatriating to Mexico. Writing to the Secretary of State on behalf of Victoria Modesta Ramírez, H. Claremont Moses, the American Vice Consul at Saltillo, narrated her predicament. Born in Wyoming in 1910, she and her husband, Fernando Ceron, had two children in the United States and an additional two in Mexico. When her husband deserted her in southern Mexico, she took her children north, until they reached Saltillo, Coahuila. Alone and likely without family in Mexico, she could not cover the cost associated with immigrant visas for the two Mexican-born children, food for their trip north, and the head-tax.[43] Like Victoria, Evelyn Romero became the sole provider of her family. In a letter to President Roosevelt in 1938, Romero narrated her migration to and settlement in Mexico.[44] Born in Pennsylvania in 1896, she married a Mexican national and together they raised eight children, one boy and seven girls. [45] With the aid of American charitable organizations and the Mexican government, the family left their home in Ohio and settled in Uruapan, Michoacán. [46] After seven of months of residing in Mexico, Romero left her husband and became the sole provider of her seven U.S.-born daughters, who ranged in age from two to twelve. With no income, she was unable to feed or even house them. To make matters worse, her son, whom she left in Ohio, was sick and desired to see her. "I pray to God every nite [sic]," she

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[42] Linda Gordon, *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935* (New York: The Free Press, 1994); Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
[43] H. Claremont Moses, American Vice Consul, to Secretary of State, June 23, 1936, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[44] Evelyn Romero to President Roosevelt, March 18, 1938, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[45] Evelyn Romero to President Roosevelt, March 18, 1938, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[46] James B. Stewart, American Consul General, to Secretary of State, April 12, 1939, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

wrote to the president of the United States, "that we can go back soon and if you can help us please let me know soon."[47]

Repatriated families often wrote after the death of a family member, which adversely affected the financial stability of a household. Prompted by her husband's death in the United States, Mrs. Jesus Roa wrote to President Roosevelt from Irapuato, Guanajuato. Her six U.S.-born children, were "dying of hunger." "There is nobody," she wrote, "that will give them something to eat and I don't know what to do." [48] The García family experienced a similar loss. Writing for her entire family, Rosie, the oldest of six children, used her best English to inform the "U.S. President" that they were "having a very hard time to get along." The García father died shortly after the family moved from California to Arandas, Jalisco.[49] He was survived by six children, which included four U.S. citizens. In Guadalajara, Carmen and Jesus Escobedo were forced to fend for themselves when their father passed away in June of 1936. From Maxwell, California, their older brother, wrote to the American consul at Guadalajara about the unfortunate incident and predicament of his siblings, both of whom were U.S. citizens.[50] The death of a mother proved to be as detrimental to the welfare of repatriated children as the death of a father. Benancio, Juanita, Manuel, and Nicolas Delgado, who were approximately fourteen, eleven, eight, and five respectively found themselves, in the words of their grandmother, "destitute there, barefoot, and starving." [51] Their mother passed away approximately two years after they arrived to Mexico.[52]

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[47] Evelyn Romero to President Roosevelt, March 18, 1938, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[48] Mrs. Jesus Roa to President Roosevelt, May 22, 1934, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[49] Rosie Garcia to "President of the U.S.," April 22, 1939, Box 1245, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[50] Pedro Escobedo to the American Consul in Guadalajara, Mexico, August 6, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[51] Teodora B. Urioste to Senator Cutting, February 20, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[52] American Consul at San Luis Potosi to Secretary of State, April 21, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

The father worked as a policemen, but his daily wage of 1.40 pesos was not enough to provide the children a comfortable material existence.

When writing about financial and personal hardship, authors placed children at the center of their narratives. For example, Nettie Navaro lamented that her children's clothes "were pretty near wore out" and that they went around "barefoot." In the face of poverty, Nettie described her family's migration from the United States to Mexico in biblical terms: "We came from heaven and fell in to hell."[53] Juanita Ramírez, a U.S. citizen, and her husband Jesus Rivera, had a difficult time feeding their five children. "My children," she wrote the president, "are nearly starving to death for the need of food and bred [sic]. The corn is so high in price that we have to work 10 hours for 2 qts of corn."[54] From Nochistlan, Zacatecas, Nicha Rodriguez informed "Uncle Sam," that her family was "suffering of hunger." [55] María Leona Senecal's letter to President Roosevelt concerned a child yet to be born. María and her husband, Leopoldo De Soto returned to Mexico when he was laid off "for not having citizenship papers." Following the advice of the Mexican consul, the couple sold their belongings and left their home in Minnesota in hopes of acquiring land from the Mexican government. They arrived to Laredo, Texas, on June 1 1938 and with assistance from the Mexican authorities continued traveling, until they reached Veracruz.[56] In her letter, she explained that the Mexican authorities were unable to provide her family with land and that the "the proprietor of this place where we are staying said that it is impossible for him to keep us any longer." Most importantly, she informed President Roosevelt that she was "pregnant" and

[53] Nettie Navarro to Paula Chavoya, June 28, 1933, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[54] Juanita Ramírez to President Roosevelt. February 4, 1937, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[55] Nicha Rodriguez to "Uncle Sam or President," February 5, 1936, Box 3, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[56] Mrs. Leopoldo De Soto to President Roosevelt, August 1, 1938, Consul Joseph F. Burt to Consul to Mr. R. Delfin C, Manager, Line Ward, S.A. October 6, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

only eating "one meal a day." "I have not to give birth to a child here," she continued, "as there is no way for us to care for it." [57]

If narratives of economic instability conveyed need and the death of a family member and plight of children played on patriarchal values, repatriates' claims to citizenship and belonging sought to affirm their entitlement to the nation's aid. "I am and American woman in great distress and wish to return to my country as quick as possible," María Leona Senecal wrote to President Roosevelt on August 1, 1938. [58] Marie Elena de Campos de Guzmán informed FDR that her six children "aspire to return to their place of birth, either to work or to educate themselves."[59] Writing about her four younger and U.S.-born sisters, the Mexican-born Rosie García compared Mexico to the United States: "We are very ill and don't like to live a week more in Mexico my sisters that are born here says that they belong to America and that they want to get here as soon as you can send for us."[60] As mothers of U.S.-born children, Juanita Ramírez, Mrs. Jesus Roa, and Marrion Terriquez were more direct in their sense of entitlement. "I think I have," Juanita wrote to President Roosevelt in 1937, "a rite [sic] to ask my nation for help at least for me and my children."[61] "Please," Mrs. Jesus Roa wrote to President Roosevelt, "I want you to help with something because my children are born in the U.S. And please answer to me." Appealing to a sense of patriarchy, Marrion Terriquez framed this assertion as a question. "Who will help them," she asked President Hoover, "if you [who] are the father of our nation can't do it, who will do it?"[62]

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57 Mrs. Leopoldo De Soto to President Roosevelt. August 1, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
58 Mrs. Leopoldo De Soto to President Roosevelt. August 1, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
59 Author's translation. Marie Elena de Campos de Guzmán to President Roosevelt, April 19, 1939, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
60 Rosie García to "President of the U.S.," April 22, 1939, Box 1245, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
61 Juanita Ramírez to President Roosevelt, February 4, 1937, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
62 Marrion Terriquez to President, December 18, 1933, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

U.S. citizens also tried to connect Mexican nationals to the U.S. nation. Referring to her husband, Mrs. Leopoldo de Soto assured the U.S. president that he was willing to provide "any kind of service to American that he may become a citizen" and to "pay back all the costs on payment just as soon as he gets any kind of income."[63] Repatriates who were able to visit the consul, like Victoria Modesta Ramírez, proved their citizenship status by presenting the consular officials with their birth certificates.[64]

Letter-writers framed repatriates as victims of an unjust system as well as victims of bad luck. They tactically deployed stories of hardship and characterizations of victimization to try to gain something in return—the economic and legal aid of the state. It was their particular plight and their citizenship status that made them worthy of the state's assistance. Yet self-representation as victim does not denote victimhood. This distinction is best exemplified through their most common and costly request: funds to cover their travel to the United States. They had received, after all, free passage to the border from local U.S. charities and organizations. They believed, like the working class Chicagoans studied by Lizabeth Cohen, that they were entitled to a lending hand from their government.[65]

Outcome of Requests

Mexicans wrote to government officials and President Roosevelt during a transformative period in U.S. history. Whether conceptualized as the "the great exception," in the words of a recent study, or as continuity with earlier moments and movements in American history, the government dedicated enormous resources to alleviate the social and economic effects of the Great

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63 Mrs. Leopoldo De Soto to President Roosevelt, August 1, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
64 H. Claremont Moses, American Vice Consul, to Secretary of State, June 23, 1936, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
65 Lizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Depression.[66] As scholars of this period have noted, the New Deal tended to benefit white males and exclude Africans Americans and minorities from most of its programs.[67] Tracing public health policies in Los Angeles from 1879 to 1939, Natalia Molina argues that "Los Angeles public health officials reversed their assimilation policies during the Depression and argued that Mexicans' biological inferiority precluded any possibility of rehabilitation."[68] The government's negative response to requests coming from Mexico should not come as a surprise. Letters written to President Roosevelt and other government officials were forwarded to the Secretary of State, who instructed the consular officials to communicate with letter-writers. Despite the heartbreaking narratives of repatriates and their citizenship status, the U.S. government consistently denied Mexicans' requests for financial assistance. Letter writers received some version of the following statement, "there is no appropriated Government fund available from which financial assistance may be extended to destitute Americans stranded abroad."[69] "The Fund for the Relief of Stranded Americans Abroad," which was established in 1924, was the only source of funding for U.S. citizens abroad. While the state recognized the citizenship status of these repatriates, the fund was not intended to aid victims of the Great Depression. Indeed, it was structured to operate as a type of loan or "a revolving fund." As such, it depended on loan recipients for both its short and long-term solvency. Lastly, it was to be used only in the "most deserving cases."

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[66] For a review of the literature on President Roosevelt and the New Deal see Robert T. Wesser, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Historians: Post-Revisionism" *New York History*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (1991); Alonzo L. Hamby, "The New Deal: Avenues for Reconsideration" *Polity,* Vol. 31, 4 (1999). For recent scholarship on the new deal, see Jefferson Cowie, *The Great Exception: The New Deal and the Limits of American Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). For a critical and insightful review of Jefferson Cowie's idea of "the great exception," as expressed in a 2008 article with Nick Salvatore, see Nancy McLean, "Getting New Deal History Wrong" *International Labor and Working-Class History*, No. 74 (2008).

[67] Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2005).

[68] Natalia Molina, *Fit to be Citizens?: Public Health in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 117.

[69] Secretary of State to American Consular Officer in Charge, Torreón, Coahuila, Mexico, September 23, 1938, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

In correspondence with the Secretary of State in 1934, the American Vice Consul at Guadalajara George H. Winters provided four reasons for denying financial assistance from this fund to one repatriate.[70] While Winters' reservations were specific to Marrion Terriquez, they could be applied to many struggling families. First, he noted that the family's return to Mexico was made possible by charity organizations in New York. Second, he reasoned, that, if the family returned to the United States, they would be "in no better circumstances, unless they should be supported by charity." Third, he attributed Juan's lack of employment to his motivation. "It is my belief," he wrote, "(that) if Mr. Terriquez can be convinced that he must support his family he will be able to secure employment enabling him to do so." Winters' statement ignored Juan's employment history in both the United States and Mexico. Lastly, he argued that funds provided by Marrion's relatives could be better spent in Mexico.[71] The consul acknowledged her status as U.S. citizen, but was concerned that she would become a burden on the nation's resources.

A case promoted by the consul general in Mexico City suggests that most cases were denied because there were very little funds in "The Fund for the Relief of Stranded Americans Abroad." Thomas D. Bowman requested seventy dollars from the Secretary of State for Barbara Priest Sánchez and her infant son. "This case," Consul General Bowman affirmed, "is unquestionably a most deserving one, and in view of her inability to obtain relief elsewhere, it is requested that if any fund referred to above remains on hand an allotment be made for her and her child."[72] Anticipating the fear of creating a possible charity case, Bowman explained that Sánchez's relatives in Detroit, Michigan were willing to house her and her child, but could not cover the cost

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[70] American Consulate, Guadalajara, to Secretary of State, August 20, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[71] American Consulate, Guadalajara, to Secretary of State, August 20, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[72] Thomas D. Bowman, American Consul General, to Secretary of State, September 19, 1933, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

of transportation to the United States. "The fund," wrote the Secretary of State, "is nearly completely exhausted and no assistance is available from that source."[73] Because "only a small amount" of the funds distributed were "refunded," the fund was "nearly completely exhausted."[74] In short, the Secretary of State rejected deserving cases supported by U.S. consular officials.

As Consul General Bowman's letter demonstrates, some consular officials became invested in the lives of repatriates. In a few instances, they used their personal funds along with their ties and connections to help Mexican women return to the United States. American consular officials' aid to Evelyn Romero and María Leona Senecal suggests that they were motivated by patriarchal values. When Evelyn's family decided to return to Mexico, charitable organizations in Akron, Ohio covered their travel to the U.S.-Mexico border. From there, the Mexican government provided transportation to Michoacán.[75] After less than a year of residing in Michoacán, Evelyn Romero left her husband and became the sole provider of her seven U.S.-born girls, who ranged in age from two to twelve. She joined other repatriates in writing to President Roosevelt. Like them, she received an unfavorable response.[76] Fortunately for Romero and her children, a range of bi-national actors came to their aid. Americans at the local Mirador Hotel in Mexico helped the family with everyday expenses and communicated with the American consul on her behalf. Consul George P. Shaw and James B. Stewart, the American consul general, used their own personal funds to aid the Romero family. Even the governor of the state of Michoacán contributed to the family's

[73] Secretary of State to American Consul General, September 28, 1933, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[74] Secretary of State to American Consul General, September 28, 1933, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[75] James B. Stewart, American Consul General, to Secretary of State, April 12, 1939, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[76] Secretary of State to American Consular Officer in Charge, México, D.F., Mexico, April 5, 1939, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

trip to the U.S.-Mexico border.[77] Finally, in the United States Mr. Miles of the Catholic Community League awaited their arrival.[78]

In Veracruz, Consul Joseph F. Burt helped the mother-to-be María Leona Senecal return to New York. Despite her predicament, Senecal's letter to President Roosevelt failed to engender a positive outcome. If she managed to accrue the capital to return, moreover, she would have to do so by herself. "It appears highly unlikely that this office would be able to grant him an immigration visa should he apply for one," the consul wrote to María Leona Senecal regarding her husband. As the baby's January due date approached, the couple was forced to contemplate separation. In one of her discussions with the consul, Senecal expressed her desire to return to the United States without her husband. Consul Joseph F. Burt visited and then wrote to Mr. R. Delfin C, the manager of the Ward Line, local agent for the New York & Cuba Mail Steamship Company, to secure free passage for this future mother to New York City. In his letter to Delfin, the consul explained the dire situation and offered to cover the cost of shipping the letter to New York and its company's reply.[79] Consul Joseph F. Burt convinced the steamship company to grant a fifty percent concession for a third class ticket from Veracruz to New York and then purchased the ticket for María Leona Senecal. He then requested a "cost of living allowance" for $28.50, the cost of repatriating this mother-to-be, from the Secretary of State.[80] The Secretary of State denied this request because that there existed "no provision of law or regulations that would permit the use of the cost of living appropriation for the reimbursement to you of the sum expended in Mrs. De Soto's behalf."[81] In his reply, the consul at Veracruz confirmed that he was "…aware that it is not

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[77] James B. Stewart, American Consul General, to Secretary of State, April 12, 1939, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[78] Evelyn Romero to President Roosevelt, March 18, 1938, Box 1246, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[79] Consul Joseph F. Burt to Mr. R. Delfin C, Manager, Line Ward, S.A. October 6, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[80] Consul Joseph F. Burt to Secretary of State, October 31, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[81] Secretary of State to Consul Joseph F. Burt, December 14, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

the duty of American consular officers to repatriate stranded Americans or to support them." However, he felt that "the facts in this case warrant extraordinary consideration and that Mrs. De Soto should not be permitted to starve in Veracruz when the cost of repatriating her is not very great."[82]

Consular officials responded to migrants' queries about visas by providing them with information, but very rarely with an actual visa. In his communication with Amelia Luna Hernández, a U.S. citizen and mother of four U.S.-born children, the American Vice Consul at Chihuahua explained that alien husbands were "not exempted from being required to establish his admissibility under the immigration laws."[83] Consular officials often mailed a memorandum that clearly laid out the numerous requirements. Prospective migrants could submit the following documents, in person, to their nearest consular officials: two certified copies of their birth record, two certified copies of "carta de buena conducta" from their city of residence during the last five years; four front-view photographs, and other documents attesting to their identity and admissibility into the United States. They were often encouraged to present proof that they were not "persons likely to become a public charge."[84] Even consular officials who were sensitive to women's precarious position denied their husbands' visa applications. This appears to conform to a larger pattern. In July 1931, for example, seventy-eight percent of visa applications were rejected.[85] According to Linda Noel, immigration officials viewed those who received charity or free passage to Mexico as "likely to become a public charge." The opinions of consular officials in Guadalajara and statistics from the Mexicali consular office support her claim. In the fiscal years

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[82] Consul Joseph F. Burt to Secretary of State, October 31, 1938, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[83] James C. Powell Jr., American Vice Consul, to Amelia Luna Hernández, December 17, 1937, Box 9, Chihuahua Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[84] James C. Powell Jr., American Vice Consul, to Mr. W.H Harroun, September 30, 1937, Box 9, Chihuahua, Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[85] Linda C. Noel, *Debating American Identity*.

ending in June 30, 1936 and June 30, 1937 the Mexicali consular office refused seventy-four percent of applicants.[86] While Noel's argument confirms what we know about repatriation and seems plausible for the period from 1931 to 1936, correspondence among consular officials sheds light on an important shift after 1937.[87]

The Department of State's instructions and notes from conferences for U.S. consuls document how state officials understood and applied the "likely to become a public charge" provision during the 1930s.[88] In 1930, just two years after the outset of the Great Depression the Department of State drafted a circular to its consular officials, which was followed by further discussion at official conferences. The Department of State made consular officials aware of the serious "economic and unemployment situation" in the United States and its "effect" on the administration of the public charge provision. While this resulted in a decrease in the number of visas issued, the Department of State did not desire to obtain a "minimum."[89] In a dispatch to consular officers in 1937, the Department of State, expressed concern about the "mistaken idea" that the number of visas issued should be kept to a minimum and that consular officials were not properly using the public charge provisions. Indeed, there was both public criticism and "an increasing number of complaints" regarding the "visa work of the consuls." Applicants complained that they were "discourteously received," not provided the opportunity to discuss their case with

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[86] "Answers to questions concerning agenda for consular conference." Mexicali Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[87] Lucy Sayler's study of Chinese immigrants, immigration law, and the federal court reminds historians of the need to carefully examine how authorities applied immigration law. See Sayler, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

[88] The conferences and state correspondence covered a range of issues, including the citizenship status of "native-born children of alien parents," "foreign-born children of American parents," and women who married Mexican nationals. Women born in the United States lost their U.S. citizenship if they married a Mexican national before before September 23, 1922 and took up residency in Mexico. The Act of June 25, 1936 tried to provide these former citizens with avenues to regain citizenship. This a topic I hope to include in subsequent revisions. See Box 4, Mexicali Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[89] Transcript of Conference of American Consuls in Mexico City, October 9-15 1937, Box 4, Mexicali Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

consular officials, and, most importantly, "that the decision has not been taken upon the basis of all the evidence presented." In his instructions to consular officials, Wilbur J. Carr provided clarification regarding the public charge provision. His long description of the difference between "probable" and "possibly" is worth quoting at length:

> It is important for a consular officer to understand that the public charge provisions of the law exclude persons 'likely' to become a public charge, that is, persons in whose cases facts exist making it 'probable' that they will become public charges. The law does not exclude persons who may 'possibly' become public charges. Section 23 of the Act of 1924, in placing the burden of proof upon an alien to show that he is not subject to exclusion, only requires him to bring forward evidence from which it may reasonably be concluded that he is not 'likely' to become a public charge.

Family and friends in the United States played a fundamental role in helping future migrants satisfy the public charge provision. However, consular officials often rejected visa applications because the person offering support was "not closely related to the applicant" and was "not under a legal or moral obligation towards him." This, Carr explained, was not a reason to assume lack of support or to reject a visa applicant. It was the job of consuls, the dispatch reminded American officials, to apply "to the facts the correct standard of the law."

At the consular conference held in Mexico City in October 1937, officials addressed and clarified how the "likely to be a public charge" provision should be applied to migrants who had previously received relief and charity from agencies in the United States. The consulate general offered the Department of State's instruction to the Ensenada consul, dated July 21, 1937, as an example. Mrs. Luz Pinon de Rivera received charity in the United States and was now applying for a visa. The Department of State informed the consul that previous charity was not "in itself a sufficient ground for the refusal of a visa…" "The essential question to be determined," the Department of State elucidated, "is whether the alien has shown that, if she should be admitted

into the United States at this time, she will have sufficient assurances of support to establish that there is no likelihood of her becoming a public charge." In further discussions at the conference, it was established that a history of relief should not be ignored, but that a visa should not be refused when a "man" presented evidence that he has reestablished himself. Furthermore, consular officials could investigate and research relief record, but only in special cases. They should, however, rely on applicants to "produce all papers possible."[90]

The consular conference of 1937 illustrates that there was a shift in how the "likely to become a public charge" provision was applied. The state rejected most applications from 1930 to 1937, but likely became more lenient after the Mexico City conference. For working class families, affidavits from family members or friends in the United States were central to acquiring a visa.

Repatriates' most common request was for the U.S. government to provide free passage. The outcome of this request demonstrates the importance of having friends and family members in the United States. While the state could not fund repatriates' travel to the United States, officials offered to contact their friends and relatives. The state and consul aided repatriates by acting as intermediaries. "She may be informed," the Secretary of State wrote to the vice consul at Guadalajara in regards to a Mexican women "if she will furnish the names and addresses of relatives or friends in the United States who may be in a position to assist her, the Department will communicate with such persons in an endeavor to obtain the necessary assistance."[91] The state expended efforts across its vast network to contact friends and relatives in distant and often multiple locations.

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90 Transcript of Conference of American Consuls in Mexico City, October 9-15 1937, Mexicali Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

91 Secretary of State to American Vice Consul, Guadalajara, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

Among the numerous cases, the state's involvement with Marrion Terriquez stands out. In the summer of 1931 and as a result of the Great Depression, the Terriquez family left New York and settled in Juan's parents' house in Guadalajara.[92] From their arrival to August of 1934, Marrion wrote at to charity organizations in the United States, U.S. presidents, the Secretary of State, and other state officials. U.S. officials communicated with Marrion's relatives in both New York and Puerto Rico. Special Agent C.R. Willard visited Mrs. Josephine Noriega, Marrion's sister, at her home in Brooklyn, New York. The Noriega family, the agent reported, like the extended family based in New York City, was "in more or less of a destitute condition" and was unable to financially assist the Terriquez family. The State Department also contacted José Cordero Jr. in Puerto Rico. Unfortunately, he was responsible for the care of his seventy-five year old father, his wife, and their four year old.[93] In his investigation, C.R. Willard discovered that the family migrated to New York to avoid the "shame of living in poverty." Before their misfortune and loss of wealth, the family "owned vast sugar cane lands." While they did not wish to make their economic situation known to their friends in Puerto Rico, Josephine Noriega informed the agent that the family could confide and might receive assistance from Eduardo Georgeotto, the former employer of Marrion's father.[94] Based on instruction from the Secretary of State, the consul asked Marrion to contact Mr. Georgeotto. Alternatively, if she consented, the State Department was willing to "make an effort through certain private connections in Porto Rico to ascertain whether relief is available for her and her family."[95] Eduardo Georgeotto, however, was bankrupt and no

[92] Marrion Terriquez to Mr. Harry N. Hirsch, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Social Welfare, September 5, (date on document, likely written earlier), Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[93] José Cordero Jr. to State Department, July 14, 1932, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[94] C.R. Willard, Special Agent, to Mr. A.R. Burr, Special Agent in Charge, Department of State, December 21, 1931, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[95] Secretary of State to American Consul, Guadalajara, January 22, 1932, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

longer employed Marrion's father.[96] In the end, Marrion's relatives in New York City and Puerto Rico were unable to fund her travel to New York.

In other instances, the Secretary of State responded to relatives writing from the United States by instructing the local consular office to investigate. The Delgado family provides an important example. Teodora B. Urioste, of New Mexico, wrote to her senator on behalf of her four U.S.-born grandchildren, Benancio, Juanita, Manuel, and Nicolás, who were approximately fourteen, eleven, eight, and five, respectively.[97] Senator Bronson Cutting forwarded her letter to the Department of Labor's Immigration and Naturalization Service, who in turn passed it along to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State informed the senator that there were no available funds to cover the cost of transportation, but that the American consul at San Luis Potosi would "make inquiries and help however possible."[98] The American consul sent one of his contacts to visit the address provided by the grandmother. This official discovered that it was the residency of Daniel Montes, a friend of the family who had resided in the United States for twenty-four years. The Delgado family used Daniel Montes' home as a mailing address. Montes confirmed that the family was indeed in a difficult situation. While Benancio, the oldest child, worked in a "home shoe-shop," he was merely an apprentice and was still laboring for free. With Montes as a guide, they located the oldest boy and then found Mr. Delgado. After seeing the letter, the father consented to the children's return to the United States. The consul's contact reported his findings to the consul and the consul in turn wrote to the Secretary of State.[99] The consul informed the Secretary of State that the total cost, one full fare and three half fares, for a train ride from León

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[96] José Cordero Jr. to State Department, July 14, 1932, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[97] American Consul at San Luis Potosi to Secretary of State, April 21, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[98] March 14, 1934, Secretary of State to Senator Cutting, March 14, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[99] American Consul, San Luis Potosi to Secretary of State, April 21, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.

Guanajuato to Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua was approximately twenty-seven dollars.[100] The oldest boy, according to the consul, was "large and strong for his age and is capable of taking his brothers and sisters to the border without other assistance."[101] While the consul and the Secretary of State could not fund the children's passage, they were able to purchase the tickets with money mailed by the family and provide the children with new birth certificates.

As intermediaries, consular officials helped U.S. citizens in Mexico obtain proof of citizenship. Like the Mexican consul in the United States, the U.S. consuls invited its citizens to register in order to maintain an accurate account of Americans abroad. This "permanent record of citizenship," according to the Consul George H. Winters, was "a useful reference in the event of serious accident or death, or in case an emergency should arise making it desirable to ascertain without undue delay the names and addresses of persons residing in a particular consular district who claim to be American citizens."[102] Because registration confirmed one's U.S. citizenship, it was an important process for repatriates to complete. While citizens were not required by law to demonstrate proof of citizenship upon re-entry, the United States Immigration Officials at the Border "expressed their gratification with this form of documentation" for Mexicans.[103] It was relatively easy and important document for citizens of Mexican descent to secure. Applicants were required to present proof of citizenship, "two identical, front-view photographs," and a witness, preferably a U.S. citizen. Successful applicants were charged one dollar and could renew their registration, free of charge, by mail.[104] U.S. consuls proved to be flexible when accepting claims

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[100] American Consul, San Luis Potosi to Secretary of State, March 24, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[101] American Consul, San Luis Potosi to Secretary of State, April 21, 1934, Box 1244, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD.
[102] George H. Winters, American Consul at Guadalajara, to Miss Ana María Carroll, August 22, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[103] Report on citizenship, Box 4, Mexicali Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[104] On June 1, 1937, Lee R. Bluhm of the Chihuahua consul notified Mr. Lauro C. Alvarez, based in Chihuahua city, that his registration would expire on June 7. Blum invited Lauro to renew his registration free of charge. Lee R.

to U.S. citizenship. James C. Powell Jr., the vice consul at the Chihuahua, instructed Miss Hertha Rateike Bermúdez, of Madera Chihuahua, to provide the "best documentary evidence of citizenship obtainable."[105] In the absence of a recorded birth at a hospitable, the consul accepted a baptismal certificate, "provided [the] baptism occurred within a short time after birth and the place of birth is shown thereon." The consul provided Hertha with an additional option, "In the event that you are unable to obtain a certified copy of either your birth or baptismal record, you should submit when you call two affidavits executed by persons, preferably American citizens, who have personal knowledge of your birth."[106] In regards to the affidavit of a witness, the consul accepted a "reputable alien known to the Consulate..."[107]

From the United States, Mexicans also registered loved ones in Mexico. Agustina G. Martinez and her daughter Angela Cervantes provide an important example. From Indiana, Agustina wrote to the American consul in Guadalajara. She explained that she had not seen Angela since 1925 and wanted her daughter to return to the United States. The Department of State verified her birth and a clerk at the Federal Building in East Chicago questioned Agustina Martinez and obtained an "affidavit of identity" from her.[108] In Guadalajara, the consul interviewed Angela's care takers. When the application was approved, Agustina M. Garcia, mailed the American consul at Guadalajara, a money order for one dollar.[109] With this proof of citizenship, the consul assured

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Bluhm, American Consul at Chihuahua, to Mr. Lauro C. Alvarez, June 1, 1937, Box 7, Chihuahua Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[105] James C. Powell Jr., American Vice Consul at Chihuahua to Miss Hertha Rateike Bermúdez, November 18, 1937, Box 7, Chihuahua Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[106] James C. Powell Jr., American Vice Consul at Chihuahua to Miss Hertha Rateike Bermúdez, November 18, 1937, Box 7, Chihuahua Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[107] James C. Powell Jr. American Vice Consul at Chihuahua to Miss Hertha Rateike Bermúdez, November 18, 1937, Box 7, Chihuahua Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[108] Department of State to American Consul, Guadalajara, Mexico. February 15, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[109] Mrs. Augustina Martinez de Garcia to George H. Winters, American Consul at Guadalajara, February 29, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

Augustina Martinez de Garcia that her daughter "should have no difficulty in returning to the United States."[110]

Consular officials' extensive research helped to verify as well as scrutinize Mexicans' claims to citizenship. Aware of the power of citizenship, Mexican nationals claimed to be born in the United States and attempted to acquire birth certificates from fellow repatriates. The Velasco family, for example, migrated to the United States around 1908 and returned to Mexico in the early 1930s, as a result of the Great Depression. In 1936 they tried to cross into the United States. The Inspector in Charge at Douglas, Arizona, asked the American consul at Torreón, Coahuila, to investigate the citizenship status of Ernesto Velasco, his wife Anastacia Ramírez de Velasco, their son Francisco Velasco and daughter Angelina Velasco de Ramírez (as well as Angelina's husband Jesus Ramírez).[111] Angelica and Francisco claimed to be born in Kansas City, Kansas. However, the Inspector in Charge at Douglas, Arizona noted that both were issued non-quota immigrant visas by the American consul at Agua Prieta, Sonora as citizens of Mexico and natives of Torreón. The siblings argued that at the time they were unable to prove their U.S. citizenship and stated that they were born in Mexico in order to enter the United States.[112] The consul located evidence regarding Angelina's birth in the records of the Torreón office of the Civil Register. "Acta no. 520," indicated that in June of 1910 the family reported her birth, which occurred almost a year prior, on September 12, 1909. The birth record identified a thirty-six old, Ernesto Velasco, as the father and Anastacia Ramírez, as the mother. Both, father and mother were born in San Luis Potosi. After not finding Francisco Velasco in the Civil Register Office in Torreón, the consul searched

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110 George H. Winters, American Consul at Guadalajara, to Mrs. Augustina Martinez de Garcia, January 18, 1936, Mrs. Augustina Martinez de Garcia to George H. Winters, American Consul at Guadalajara, February 21, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

111 EDW. J. Shaughnessy, Deputy Commissioner to Secretary of State, February 26, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

112 D.C. Kinne, Inspector in Charge, to American Consul at Torreón, Coahuila. January 28, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

the Catholic Church Guadalupe in Torreón, where he found a baptismal record, which indicated that a Francisco Velazquez was born on July 4, 1903 and baptized on November 2, 1903. Both Ernesto and Anastacia's surnames were incorrect, Velasquez and Iracueto, respectively. However, the names of the paternal and maternal grandparents matched those found on Angelica's birth record. The consul also visited Rinconada de la Union 171 to inquire about the family's residence in Torreón. "The small adobe house formerly bearing this number," the consul wrote, "has been demolished." He learned from the owner of the property that the family returned to Mexico in early 1930s and resided at the adobe house for fourteen months begging in 1931. The consul was also able to speak with Ernesto's brother, Apolinar Velasco. From Apolinar he confirmed what he suspected to be true: that the family migrated to the United States in 1908 or 1909 and that Francisco and Angelica were born in Torreón.[113] More intrepid migrants sought citizenship by acquiring new identities. This too, however, came under the scrutiny of U.S. government officials. As late as 1955, officials from the Immigration Naturalization Service and a local Texas judge corresponded about the practice of "becoming citizens" by acquiring birth certificates "under false pretenses."[114]

In many instances, however, the consul facilitated communication between Mexicans in the United States and their family in Mexico, and the movement of birth certificates and resources. For example, in 1936 Eliza Provencio de Larroque wrote to the U.S. consul to organize the return of her younger sister and her sister's two children. Cecilia Provencio de Sota and her two-year old "Manuelito," were born in the United States, while one-year old José was born in Mexico. Eliza's notarized letter to the consul expressed a concern with the provision in immigration law that barred

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[113] Nelson R. Park, American consul at Torreón, to Secretary of State, March 21, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[114] W.S. Pickett, County Judge, Karnes County, to Mr. Walter A. Sahli, District Director, United States Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service, San Antonio, Texas, 56,364/42.33, RG 84, NARA 1.

"aliens" likely to become a public charge: "I am willing and able to take care, receive and maintain my sister Cecilia Provencio de Sota and I am willing and able to put a bond, if required, to guarantee the United States immigration authorities, that she will never become public charge on any community during her stay in this country, and that the two children will be sent to public school at least until they reach the age of fifteen years." Along with her letter, Eliza mailed Cecilia's birth certificate, a pre-paid order from the Southern Pacific Company for rail transportation from El Paso, Texas to Los Angeles, and a postal money order for fifteen dollars, the cost of transportation from Torreón, Coahuila to El Paso, Texas.[115] Clifton P. English, vice consul at Torreón, corresponded and delivered these items to Cecilia's husband, Manuel.[116] With her husband's consent, Cecilia and her two children planned their departure for August 1936.[117]

Like Eliza, Pedro Escobedo worked with the consul to bring his siblings to the United States. His sister and brother, Carmen and Jesus, were left to care for themselves following the death of their father in June of 1936. From Maxwell, California and Guadalajara, the Escobedo siblings planned their migration north. Pedro informed the consul that their father had died and that he was sending them "a little money every day." He also mentioned that his brother and sister were born in the United States and had their birth certificates.[118] In Mexico, Carmen went to the American consular office and presented her and her brother's birth certificates, which according to the George H. Winters, were "sufficient to establish their American citizenship provided they are properly identified." The siblings, the consul assured Pedro, "…should be able to join you

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[115] Eliza Provencio de Larroque to American Consul, Torreón, July 21, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[116] In a letter dated July 31, 1936, Cecilia gave her husband authorization receive the documents and funds. Cecilia P. Sota to Mr. English, July 31, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[117] Clifton P. English, American Vice Consul, to Elisa Provencio de Larroque, August 11, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[118] Pedro Escobedo to the American Consul in Guadalajara, August 6, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

without any undue difficulty."[119] After communicating with the consul, Pedro worked to obtain rail road passes as well as "a little money for their eats…their journey expenses."[120] They planned to return to their country of birth in November 1936. From California, Frank F. Valadez mailed the U.S. consulate at Guadalajara two Pacific Greyhound bus tickets for travel from Nogales, Arizona to Los Angeles and a money order for twenty-six dollars and fifty cents to cover the cost of transportation from Guadalajara to Nogales.[121] In Guadalajara, the consul gave both the funds and the bus tickets to their intended recipients: Mrs. Juana R. Franco and her daughter Rose María.[122]

The consul played a less significant but still important role in uniting the Esparza siblings. In 1930, the Esparza parents were "absolutely indigent and unable to support" their daughter, Jovita. Limited in their options, they decided to place the approximately eleven-year old girl in the Casa de Beneficencia, an orphanage in Torreón, Coahuila. Six years after she was admitted, Jovita's godparents notified the orphanage that her mother and father passed away. They likely also informed Jovita's brother, who was living in a town near San Jose, California. That same year, he wrote to the orphanage and mailed funds to cover her travel expenses. Jovita journeyed north with a baptismal certificate, which indicated that she was born in Arizona on February 14, 1919, and a letter from the Casa de Beneficencia. This document and her claims to citizenship were bolstered by the actions of the president of the Casa de Beneficencia, Elias Tejada, and Nelson R. Park, the U.S. consul at Torreón, Coahuila. Elias Tejada wrote and explained Jovita Esparza's case

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[119] George H. Winters, American Consul at Guadalajara, to Pedro Escobedo, August 25, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, NARA, College Park, MD.
[120] Pedro Escobedo to George H. Winters, American Consul at Guadalajara, September 8, 1936, Box 2, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[121] Frank F. Valadez to George H. Winters, American Consul at Guadalajara, April 27, 1936, Box 3, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[122] Affidavit, signed by Juana R. Franco, for funds and transportation. April 14, 1936, Box 3, Guadalajara Consulate, 1936 to 1949, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

to the consul and noted, among other things, that "the girl when admitted to the asylum in 1930 spoke only a few words of Spanish…" Based on Tejada's statement, the consul at Torreón wrote to the consul in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua: "While the case was unknown to the consulate until a few days ago, and the consulate is unable to confirm the nationality of the girl, I am writing at the suggestion of Elias Tejada….to report the case in advance of the girl's arrival at the border, and trust she will have no difficulty in being admitted." To help the consul identify Jovita, Nelson R. Park listed her physical attributes: dark skin, black hair and eyes, and approximately four feet, ten inches.[123] When she arrived to the border, Jovita visited the consul at Ciudad Juárez and was "referred to the immigration authorities" and then admitted as a U.S. citizen. She entered, the consul at Ciudad Juárez informed Nelson R. Park, on June 21, 1936.[124]

The family was at the center of Mexicans' efforts to return to the United States. The state placed the financial cost of transporting citizens to the United States on the friends and family of repatriates. For non-citizens applying for visas it was their networks in the United States that helped them prove that they were not likely to become a public charge. Thus, while the returning to the United States depended heavily on assistance from families in the United States, migration north often resulted in the breaking up of the nuclear family. Whether families were formed in the United States or Mexico, they often contained a Mexican national: either a parent or a child. Laws concerning derivative citizenship were structured to prevent U.S-born Mexicans from passing on citizenship to their children. As Yuki Oda argues, the Nationality Act of 1940, which imposed residency requirements that it made on both parents and children that made citizenship derivation

[123] Nelson R. Park, Consul at Torreón, to George P. Shaw, Consul at Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. June 18, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.
[124] Geo P. Shaw, Consul at Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, to Nelson R. Park, Consul at Torreón, June 22, 1936, Box 1, Torreón Consulate, 1936, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

"almost impossible."[125] Thus, for many U.S.-born youth returning to the United States required leaving loved ones in Mexico.

U.S. Citizens Along the Border

Throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century, Mexican children and youth resided along the U.S.-Mexico border. Often pushed by the Mexican revolution, they crossed into the United States to join families, to attend schools, or to work. The less fortunate, often those without networks, became orphans.[126] In the 1920s, it became increasingly difficult for Mexicans without documents to cross the border. Scholars of immigration point to the increased racialization of Mexicans and their association with "illegality," the creation of the Border Patrol, and the enforcement of immigrant laws.[127] The repatriation of Mexican families in the 1930s resulted in the congregation of U.S.-born youth along the southern side of the U.S.-Mexico border. At least 500 resided in Sonora, just south of Arizona. These repatriates took advantage of their U.S. citizenship and crossed daily, temporarily resided in the United States, and demanded resources from U.S. agencies. Focusing on the Arizona-Sonora region, this section argues that the actions of U.S. citizens and their status as children forced local and national officials to produce knowledge about, and policy for, this new demographic. The actions of these youth force scholars of repatriation to consider the tangible, though limited, benefits of U.S. citizenship.[128]

U.S. citizens of repatriated families often ended up along the border after their families failed to integrate into Mexico's labor market. For example, one family returned to Mexico in the

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125 Yuki Oda, "Family Unity in U.S. Immigration Policy, 1921-1978" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014).
126 Yolanda Chávez Leyva, "Qué Son los Niños?: Mexican Children along the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1880-1930" (PhD diss., The University of Arizona, 1999).
127 Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (New Jersey: Princeton, 2004); Alexandra Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Kelly Little Hernández, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2010).
128 Too often, scholars assume that U.S. citizenship held little value for repatriates. Linda Noel's recent work on Mexican immigration and Arizona provides a good example. See *Debating American Identity*.

early 1930s with the intention of acquiring land offered by the Mexican government.[129] When that venture proved unsuccessful, the family migrated and settled in Nogales, Sonora. With the husband unable to find work, the parents had a difficult time supporting their seven children, four of which were born in the United States. The mother helped generate income for the family by making and selling tamales. To ease the family's expenses, the four U.S.-born children joined relatives in Arizona, just across the border.[130] Another family, composed of a sixty-year-old retired miner, his wife, and four U.S. born children—an eighteen-year old boy and three girls aged sixteen, thirteen, and eleven—departed for Mexico in 1931. Just a few years after they settled in Mexico, the father passed away which resulted in "a period of extreme poverty for the family." Friends of the family who lived in the United States convinced the mother to send her four children to reside with them.[131] In another instance, a deserted mother was forced to work in a laundry from ten in the morning to midnight. Her fourteen-year old son was not in school and had a difficult time settling in Mexico. In dire need of income, he frequently crossed into Arizona.[132]

These children were part of a larger cohort of U.S. citizens living along the border. Statistics compiled by Santa Cruz County Welfare Board provides us with an impression of this problem in the Arizona-Sonora borderlands during the 1930s. As early as 1933, this agency registered sixty-eight families, which contained two-hundred and twenty-one "American born

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129 The reports that I utilize for this section do not provide the names of children or their parents.
130 Untitled report regarding "border problems in Nogales, Arizona." The report does not include a date, but it was mailed to the U.S. Children's Bureau from Santa Cruz County Board of Social Security and Welfare on February 13, 1942. Box 165, 1943, Record Group 102, Records of the Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland (Hereafter, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD).
131 "A Study of Child Welfare on the Border." The report does not include a date, but it is likely from the early 1940s. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.
132 Untitled report regarding "border problems in Nogales, Arizona." The report does not include a date, but it was mailed to the U.S. Children's Bureau from Santa Cruz County Board of Social Security and Welfare on February 13, 1942. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.

children."[133] Chairman Mr. O.A. Smith estimated that at least five hundred U.S.-born youth resided in Sonora, just south of Arizona. He used this sample to suggest that at least fifty percent of repatriates were born in the United States. "If it should prove true," Smith wrote to Miss Hutsinpillar, "that two hundred thousand have gone back then instead of fifty thousand of that number being our own native people it would be nearer one hundred thousand."[134] These unnamed children and youth crossed into the United States for a variety of reasons. Some were accustomed to and preferred schools in the United States. Others crossed daily to find work and earn money for their families. Officials noted that youth also engaged in delinquency, such as petty theft, and begging on the streets. Children, youth, and their family and acquaintances also sought more formal ways to obtain aid and resources by visiting charity organizations and agencies in the United States.

The actions and plight of children and youth on both sides of the border gained the attention of local social workers, judges, and the Children's Bureau, in Washington D.C. For Mr. O.A. Smith, the repatriation of U.S. citizens raised serious ethnical questions. By sending these children and youth to Mexico, Smith believed that "we have deprived so many helpless and innocent American citizens of the rights and privileges of their citizenship." Among these rights was the "privilege of being educated in American schools and living in their own native land…" According to Smith, the challenge of returning to the United States for those families who were repatriated with the aid of charity organized only added to this grave injustice.[135] The repatriation of U.S.

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[133] In his 1937 annual report of Americans residing in the consular district of the consulate at Mexicali, consul Howard A. Bowman noted that there was "no definite information" regarding the number of "American born Mexicans." However, the U.S. Immigration Service at Calexico issued 916 identification cards. In 1939, 1,900 identification cards were issued. Box 4, 1937, Box 14, 1940, Mexicali Consulate, 1937, RG 84, NARA, College Park, MD.

[134] O.A. Smith, Chairman of Santa Cruz County Welfare Board, to Miss Hutsinpillar, U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, September 19, 1933, Box 481, 1933 to 1936, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.

[135] O.A. Smith, Chairman of Santa Cruz County Welfare Board, to Miss Hutsinpillar, U.S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau, September 19, 1933, Box 481, 1933 to 1936. RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.

citizens, for Smith, amounted to the nation's "discharge of its responsibilities towards its dependent minor citizens." Other officials were less sympathetic to the predicament of children and youth. "A Study of Child Welfare on the Border," a report from the early 1940s claimed that "every conceivable subterfuge is used to try and get them into the American schools, to get them on relief rolls and in many cases the relatives on this side of the line have actually carried their food and other relief commodities to those across the line."[136] Studying the El Paso, Texas region, Yolanda Chávez Leyva found a similar attitude among private and public institutions. She argues that they viewed Mexican children, especially "juvenile delinquents" and orphans as "threats to law and order."[137] Irrespective of their divergent ideas about Mexican children and youth, the two officials in Arizona recognized the citizenship status of repatriates and the fact that many lived on both sides of the border. Most importantly, they worried about these children's futures and their potential impact on U.S. society. "The boy," one report predicted, "is well on his way to becoming delinquent and because of his preference for the United States will no doubt come here to live his adult years if he can manage it."[138] In explaining the rationale for accepting a case, Miss Lillie C. Norlin, a Child Welfare Worker for the Arizona State Department of Social Security and Welfare, argued that caring for "American born and American-reared children" was the only way to avoid "abuse here or vagrancy across the line."[139]

Local organizations and the Children's Bureau in Washington D.C. dedicated time and energy to studying youth along the border. In the early 1930s, a social welfare worker in Nogales,

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[136] "A Study of Child Welfare on the Border." The report does not include a date, but it is likely from the early 1940s. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.
[137] Yolanda Chávez Leyva, "Qué Son los Niños?: Mexican Children along the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1880-1930," (The University of Arizona, 1999), 208.
[138] Untitled report regarding "border problems in Nogales, Arizona." The report does not include a date, but it was mailed to the U.S. Children's Bureau from Santa Cruz County Board of Social Security and Welfare on February 13, 1942. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.
[139] "A Study of Child Welfare on the Border." The report does not include a date, but it is likely from the early 1940s. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.

Arizona, conducted informal interviews with teachers, doctors, and business people "across the line." For "A Study of Child Welfare on the Border," its authors mailed "questionnaires" to the twenty-five counties within the states that border Mexico. Of the eight replies they received, four counties noted that they experienced the same "problems…in a greater or lesser degree" with Arizona.[140] These reports were augmented by correspondence between officials as well as visits by two officials from the Children's Bureau. In 1933, Florence W. Hutsinpillar visited the border regions of the U.S. southwest.[141] As late as 1941, officials from this agency continued to visit the southwest. During her visit to New Mexico, Katherine Lenroot's provided the supervisor of Child Welfare Services in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with the report on border problems in Arizona.[142] Finally, U.S. officials reached out to the Mexican government to discuss Arizona's "border problem" and mailed a 1943 study to the Secretary of Foreign Relations.[143]

Both locally and nationally, U.S. officials acknowledged the challenges faced by Mexican youth and attempted to create and implement specific policy. In 1941, a social worker from Nogales, Arizona requested "approval and financial support" from the State Welfare Department and the Children's Bureau to target Mexican children.[144] Officials developed plans to provide Mexican citizens "living just over the line" with information about programs available through the child-welfare program, to conduct educational outreach to parents of the "Spanish-American

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[140] "A Study of Child Welfare on the Border." The report does not include a date, but it is likely from the early 1940s. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.
[141] Florence W. Hustinpillar to Mr. O.A. Smith. November 23, 1933, Box 481, 1933 to 1936, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.
[142] Miss Lois S. McVey, Supervisor, Child Welfare Services, Department of Public Welfare, Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Katherina F. Lenroot, Chief, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, December 30, 1941. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.
[143] Miss Atkinson to Miss Colby, January 23, 1943, Box 36, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.
[144] "Specific Plans and Accomplishments for Child Welfare Among Spanish-Speaking Minority Groups Reported by the Child-Welfare Division," Expediente III-666-1, Acervo Histórico Diplomático de Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, México D.F; Box 36, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.

group," and to extend case work to Mexican children and youth.[145] Charity and welfare organizations in Arizona also helped U.S. citizens of Mexican descent in a number of ways. They often communicated with parents and family members in Nogales and Mexican officials, such as the Presidente Municipal of Nogales, Sonora. In other instances, social welfare workers placed children in foster homes. The family composed of a sixty-one-year old miner and four U.S.-born children provides a good example. In the mid 1930s, just four years after their arrival to Mexico, the father passed away and left the mother to care for her children. She re-married, but her husband was unable to care for the children from her first marriage. The agency placed the girls in a foster home and maintain contact with the "boy," the oldest of the siblings. The agency hoped that the two oldest siblings would soon be able to care for their younger sisters.[146]

The actions of these local and national organizations are significant for understanding children and youth along the border in the first four decades of the twentieth century. Scholars in both Mexico and the United States have shown that in the early twentieth century social reformers became concerned with the plight and future of children as they viewed childhood and adolescents as distinct developmental stages. Studying the El Paso, Texas border, Yolanda Chávez Leyva found that children and youth in this region "often did without services they needed and received instead unwanted attention." Orphans in El Paso, she demonstrates, were excluded from the city's orphanages because of "ethnic prejudice." While the sources presented here are not robust enough to track change over time, it is clear that in the 1940s officials in Arizona sought to aid repatriated youth that held U.S. citizenship.

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[145] "Specific Plans and Accomplishments for Child Welfare Among Spanish-Speaking Minority Groups Reported by the Child-Welfare Division," Expediente III-666-1, Acervo Histórico Diplomático de Secretaria de Relaciones Exteriores, México D.F; Box 36, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.

[146] "A Study of Child Welfare on the Border." The report does not include a date, but it is likely from the early 1940s. Box 165, 1943, RG 102, NARA, College Park, MD.

Conclusion

Rather than a comprehensive account of repatriates' return to the United States, this chapter constructs a history of repatriates' interaction with the state and argues that from Mexico, U.S.-born Mexicans sought to exercise their rights as U.S. citizens. The two dynamics that I have outlined show that they had mixed results. Despite Mexicans' narratives of struggle and claims to citizenship, the Secretary of State denied their petitions for financial assistance. Among the cases studied, it is clear that consular officials provided Mexicans with funds to return on rare occasions, and then from their own personal monies. The state's lack of financial support stood in stark opposition to the many efforts made and funds allocated to provide Mexican families with free transportation to Mexico, as well as the ambitious agenda of the New Deal. In her letter to the New York City Bureau of Charities, Marrion Terriquez, captured this contradiction. "I don't think that in the same way," she wrote, "that there is money to deportate [sic] foreigners from different parts of U.S. to their own countries, there will not be a cent, to save out an American family from hunger and desperation, out of a country like Mexico, where charity never exists."[147] Despite this paradox, U.S. citizenship did provide Mexicans with access to state aid. Consular officials helped repatriates acquire proof of citizenship and facilitated the travel of documents and resources from the United States to Mexico. Ultimately the ability of U.S.-born Mexicans to use their citizenship to return to the United States rested on the financial resources of their families and friends. In the end, the financial burden of the Great Depression rested on the shoulders of relatives of repatriated Mexicans.

[147] Marrion Terriquez to Bureau of Charities, New York City. July 11, 1934, Box 1247, RG 59, NARA, College Park, MD

Repatriates who resided along the U.S.-Mexico border relied on a much different calculus. They took advantage of their proximity to the United States and sent their children to live and work in the United States. The precarious position of these cross-border children and youth attracted the attention of local social workers and judges as well as the Children's Bureau in Washington, D.C. In this case, proximity to the border forced U.S. officials to acknowledge the detriment of repatriation on migrant families and U.S. citizens and, most importantly, to develop policies that benefited these cross-border children. Rather than passive victims, U.S.-born youth and their families requested help from the U.S. government.

This chapter advances our understanding of repatriation by examining the relationship between transnational families and the state. While there are some important distinctions between the repatriation process and returning to the United States, there are also some important similarities. In both cases, Mexican and U.S. citizens approached their governments and relied on their transnational networks. Repatriates often arrived to the homes of relatives and depended on their financial sources. The chances of returning to the United States were better for those with family in the United States. In the end, families on both sides of the border provided the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the arrival of loved ones.

Epilogue

Disobedient Children: Pachucos and the Mexican Nation

By following migrant parents and U.S.-born youth across the U.S.-Mexico border, this dissertation constructs a history of transnational citizenship. It narrates migrant families' efforts to secure rights from the Mexican government while in the United States and from the United States government while they resided in Mexico. The first two chapters construct a history of transnational projects to educate migrant children. Chapter One focuses on the founding of schools for migrant children throughout the United States from 1924 to 1939. Chapter Two explores citizenship and education by uncovering the efforts of youth, migrant parents, and American educators to obtain scholarships for U.S.-born youth from the Mexican government. Chapter Three, Four, and Five offer new interpretations of repatriation by focusing on the relationship between repatriates and Mexican state, the role of the family during repatriation, and efforts by U.S.-born youth to gain entry into the United States.

I use oral histories conducted during the 1970s, newspapers, field notes, personal letters, and government documents to demonstrate that migrant parents and U.S.-born youth deployed a set of strategies to navigate belonging. In both Mexico and the United States, these families obtained resources and aid through their familial and personal networks, visited consuls, and wrote to government officials, particularly presidents. Through letter writing, U.S.-born youth made claims to U.S. and Mexican citizenship. In their carefully crafted letters, migrant children emphasized their affinity and ties to the nation, echoed the U.S and Mexican nation's patriarchal values, and positioned themselves as obedient children worthy of the state's support.

These instances represent formal efforts to practice citizenship and thus uphold a normative understanding of citizenship. However, these state-centered approaches to citizenship were accompanied by informal and alternative conceptions of belonging and rights. This epilogue narrates a debate about the identity of pachucos (Mexican American zoot suiters) in Mexico City in order to demonstrate competing ideas about the Mexican nation's cultural and linguistic borders. By analyzing representation of pachucos in the writings of Mexican journalists, in Mexico City's popular theaters, and in debut film of the Mexican actor Germán Valdés (better known as Tin Tan), I show that these actors used the metaphor of the family to discuss the place of these youth in the Mexican nation.

Pachucos in Mexico City

Pachucos were children of migrants who came of age in the 1930s and 1940s. They wore zoot suits (loose, oversized suit outfits), spoke *caló* (a semantically complex mix of English and Spanish), frequented racially mixed dance clubs, and resided in cities in Southwestern United States. They gained international attention during World War II, particularly during and after the Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots of June 1943. During the first week of June, U.S. servicemen roamed East Los Angeles in search of Mexican youth wearing zoot suits. This was a response to the alleged beating of eleven sailors by a Mexican American gang. As many as two-hundred U.S. servicemen participated in the stripping and beating of zoot suiters. In the words of Rudy Sánchez, an eyewitness, "walking and riding around our neighborhood with sticks, boards, clubs, rocks, and even guns looking for any 'zoot suiter' they could find to use their weapons on."[1] After a public beating and humiliation, pachucos were arrested for disturbing the peace.[2] While earlier work

[1] Quoted in Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance during World War II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 169.
[2] For a multiethnic approach to zoot suit culture and violence as well as a detailed description and reading of the Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots see Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot.*

viewed these youth as victims of U.S. racism, Luis Alvarez argues that through zoot suit culture, youth resisted an Anglo-Saxon American identity and formed an imagined community outside of World War II American nationalism.[3] By focusing on Mexican actors, I ground pachucos within the Mexican nation and show that this youth culture became a site to both affirm and contest Mexico's linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Defining Pachucos

By the 1940s, Mexicans on both sides of the border used the term "pocho" to describe children of migrants who resided in the United States. In Francisco J. Santamaría's *Diccionario general de americanimso,* published in Mexico in 1942 and again in 1959 as *Diccionario de mejicanismos*, a "pocho" was defined as a Mexican from California who mixed English and Spanish. The word, according to Tino Villanueva, originated from the Sonoran word "pochi," which means to cut.[4] The accuracy of this claim is not as important as the association of these two words. The implication was that pochos were uprooted from their origins.[5] In a 1940 article for the Mexican magazine *Hoy,* the journalist and writer Salvador Novo defined pochos as a descendants of the nineteenth century mythical figure Joaquin Murrieta and claimed that they were either unable to or lacked a desire to speak Spanish.[6] José Vasconcelos used this word to attack his enemies. In his memoir, Vasconcelos referenced those he deemed traitors to the Mexican nation—as a result of their proximity to the U.S.—as "pochas," the feminine form of pocho. Migrant children embodied many of Mexican's anxieties about migration, particularly the loss of cultural practices,

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3 Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot.*
4 Tino Villanueva, *Chicanos: Antología, Histórica y Literaria* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980), 11.
5 José Manuel Valenzuela Arce, "Mojados y Chicanos" in *Mitos Mexicanos.* ed., Enrique Florescano, (México: Santillana Ediciones Generales, 2001), 211.
6 Salvador Novo, *La Vida en México en el periodo Presidencial de Lázaro Cárdenas* (México: Empresas Editoriales, S.A.,1964).

language, and identity. Indeed, as Chapter One demonstrates, the Secretary of Public Education and Mexican consuls were eager to teach migrant children Spanish and Mexican history.

During and after the Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots, journalists and comedians used the term pocho, both implicitly and explicitly, to explain pachucos to a Mexican audience. An article in *La Prensa* argued that pachucos were an "affront to our country" and that the majority of them were not Mexican by birth or nationality. *Excelsior* claimed that they did not speak Spanish and lacked knowledge of Mexico. The vitriol against Mexican American youth extended to those who defended them, such as the students at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico). In response to the Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots, these university students organized a protest to rebuke what they perceived as U.S. racism. The Partido Nacional Revolucionario (Institutional Revolutionary Party) "denounced the demonstrators claiming they were irresponsible agitators who 'do not represent true students, and even less the Mexican people.'" For the historian Richard Griswold del Castillo this sentiment served to "rationalize a policy of non-intervention."[7]

In Mexico City's popular theaters, comedians expressed their disdain for this Mexican American youth culture through performance. The Mexican comedian Donato took the stage at the Follies Bergere Theater with his show entitled "Qué rechulo es mi tarzán" (How Handsome ismy Tarzan") on June 15 1943.[8] Eleven days later, Roberto Soto's show "El máximo pachuco" (The Main Pachuco) debuted at the Lirico Theater. Here, I focus on Soto's interpretation. The Mexican comedian was born June 7 1896 in the state of Zacatecas. By the early 1940s, Soto worked for numerous theater companies and performed at countless clubs in Mexico City. Like other

[7] Richard Griswold del Castillo, "The Los Angeles 'Zoot Suit Riots' Revisited: Mexican and Latin American Perspective," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, no 12, (2000), 380.
[8] See advertisement for "Qué Rechulo es mi Rarzán," *Excelsior* June 15, 1943.

popular comedians, Soto brought current events and controversies onto the stage. Josephus Daniels, the U.S. ambassador to Mexico from 1933 to 1942, referred to Soto as "the Will Rogers of Mexico" and noted his jabs at Mexican politicians.[9] In this instance, Soto directed his jokes at pachucos. While the available primary sources make it difficult to reconstruct Soto's act, the advertisements for the show convey his perspective on pachucos. The word pocho always preceded the title of the program.[10] Roberto Soto, the "ultimate pachuco," was merely interpreting pachucos (the advertisements use the word "superinterpretación"). Soto could perform as a pachuco because "he got to know them" and "sabe de pie que cojean" (this expression implies knowing someone well enough not fall for their lies).[11] Because of this acquired, almost anthropological knowledge, Soto was able to dress, talk, and dance like "them." In addition to Soto's "authentic" performance, the audiences at the Lirico Theater were treated to a pachuco jazz band imported directly from Los Angeles, California. However, the advertisement described the sound that emanated from their instruments as "scandalous."[12]

Mexican journalists and comedians criticized pachucos' use of language and expressed frustration with what they perceived as evidence of these youths' distance from Mexico and their affinity for and proximity to the United States. In the press and popular theater, pachucos emerged as individuals who lacked knowledge of Mexico's history and cultural practices. Tin Tan espoused an entirely different relationship between pachucos, language, and Mexican identity.

Germán Valdés arrived to Mexico City after Donato and Roberto Soto performed as pachucos and after the city's newspaper covered the Los Angeles Zoot Suit Riots. While he was not the first Mexican comedian to perform as a Mexican American zoot suiter, he is Mexico's most

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9 Josephus Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947), 448.
10 See advertisements in *Excelsior* for June 25 to July 2, 1943.
11 See advertisements in *Excelsior* for June 25 to July 2, 1943.
12 See advertisement in *Excelsior* for June 27, 1943.

famous and celebrated pachuco. In an interview conducted in 1968, he reflected on the origins of "pachuquismo" in Mexico and his arrival to Mexico City. He differentiated himself from other popular comedians by making claims to his own authenticity:

> Well, Yes…I would say yes. The pachucos who were here like the fat Soto, Resortes, etc, lacked the peculiar touch. I brought the true way of speaking, the real clothing, the chain for the keys, the feather for the hat, the baggy pants, the large suit jacket, etc."[13]

While the attire was significant, the most important difference between Germán Valdés and comedians like Roberto Soto and Donato was the former's proximity to pachuco culture. Germán Valdés' affinity for jazz, use of Spanish and English, and the zoot suit were incorporated into his performances and films in a manner that celebrated pachuco's cultural practices. His experiences as a teenager along the U.S.-Mexico border shaped his sense of self, which in turn was performed on Mexico City stages, the radio airwaves, and on the big screen.

Germán Valdés was born in Mexico City in 1915, but his family moved to Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua in 1931. As a young man, he listened to a radio show from El Paso, Texas entitled "From the Border," which featured music by the Andrew Sisters, big bands, and a disc jockey who spoke in "Americanized Spanish."[14] Valdés also witnessed and participated in the youth culture of the borderlands. Though his father disapproved of boys and young men who wore zoot suits, this did not preclude Valdés from slipping into a long suit jacket, baggy pants, and stylish hat. In response to his father's loaded question: "Why is Rafael saying you think you are a zoot suiter?" A young Valdés confidently affirmed "I do not think, father, I am a zoot suiter."[15] For this

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[13] Antonio Salgado Herrera, "Pachucamente Loco," in *100 entrevistas personaje: protagonistas de las artes, la ciencia, y el espectáculo en México* (México: Productora e Importadora de Papel, 1992), 249.
[14] Rosalia Valdés Julián, *Historia Inedita de Tin Tan* (México: Editorial Planeta Mexicana, 2003), 36.
[15] Translation by author, Valdés Julián, *Historia Inedita*, 35.

borderland youth, the stylish hat, long jacket, and tapered pants embodied more than just an expression of taste:

> A suiter—Germán explained while he displayed and put on his hat—is a pachuco, someone born here who lives over there—he put on his jacket and a chain—someone who feels comfortable here and there and who is different—he put on a tie—someone from both sides, father."[16]

Ironically, it was his father's connections that provided the setting for a serendipitous entrance into the radio airwaves as a pachuco. When Valdés was nineteen years old, Pedro Meneses, his father's friend, hired him to work at the radio station XEJ de Juarez. While fixing cables at the studio, he jokingly imitated the Mexican singer Agustin Lara. This innocuous gesture led to Valdés' entrance onto the airwaves as "Topillo Tapas." Don Pedro dubbed him Topillo Tapas because a "topillero" was someone who used English words in Mexico, where it was not deemed necessary. Topillo Tapas proved to be a hit, leading to a daily program titled "El Barco de la illusion" (The Boat of Illusion), where he sang, performed skits, mixed English and Spanish, and wore a zoot suit.

In July 1943, the Paco Miller Company, a vaudeville-like group composed predominately of Mexican performers, took the stage at the Colón Theater in El Paso, Texas. Paco Miller, the main attraction and director of the group, invited Germán Valdés to join the company on their tour through California and Mexico. Valdés accepted the invitation and continued to perform as a pachuco. Now, he was joined by Marcelo Chavéz. In addition to a sidekick, Paco Miller gave this young performer a new stage name. Miller borrowed the name "Tin Tan" from Juan Muñoz Leyva, a Chilean radio star, who was known as "El niño de tin tan" (the son of tin tan) because he concluded his monologues by using a glass filled with water to produce the sound: "tin tan." With a new stage name and his side-kick Marcelo, Tin Tan arrived to and settled in Mexico City.

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[16] Translation by author, Valdés Julián, *Historia Inedita,* 35.

Shortly after his Mexico City debut, Valdés found work at the radio station XEW. This station was home to Mexico's most important celebrities and played an important role in launching many of Mexico's most famous actors into stardom. Indeed, after working in Mexico City for just two years Tin Tan played the lead role in the film *El hijo desobediente.* Directed by Humberto Gomez Landero, the film screened on November 15 1945 at the Palacio Cinema. Like other Mexican films, it was shown throughout the Americas.

During Mexico's Golden Age of Cinema, the mid-1930s to 1950s, radio and popular theater served as an important stepping stone for many actors.[17] Germán Valdés and Mario Moreno (Cantinflas) developed their characters and techniques on the stage of popular theaters. For Tin Tan, this consisted of performing as a pachuco, singing, using the malleability of language to provoke laughter, working with his "square" sidekick, and imitating Mexican icons. Tin Tan incorporated all of these elements into his first major film *El hijo desobediente.* While romance and a case of mistaken identity are central to the narrative, the plot centers around a conflict between father and son. For our reading, the more pertinent aspects of this film are familial conflict and resolution and Tin Tan's musical performances.

In the film's first scene Tin Tan wears a long suit jacket, a carnation on his left lapel, a black face pin on his right lapel, and a stylish hat with two large feathers. He plays his guitar in front of a curtain and looks directly into the camera as if he were performing for a live audience. As soon as he stops singing we realize that he was playing in his house and with the help of a record player. When the father enters the room, it becomes evident why the protagonist is dubbed "the disobedient son." In the movie's first dialogue, Tin Tan rejects his father's invitation to administer the family's land. He explains that while studying engineering in the United States, he

[17] See Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Cantinflas and the chaos of Mexican modernity* (Wilmington, Delaware: SR Books, 2001).

found that his true calling was music. The father insists that Tin Tan be a man of the field. Tin Tan respectfully disagrees and informs his father that he can fend for himself.

This conversation is set in a room that contains a large doorway, which is directly behind the father and reveals a vast body of land. Wearing a white short-sleeve shirt, white pants, and a typical sombrero, the father stands in stark contrast to Tin Tan. The two individuals are further differentiated by their use of language. Tin Tan uses Spanish and English words interchangeable. On the wall behind Tin Tan and his father is a triangular sign that reads Texas even though they are in Chihuahua, Mexico. Thus, the film's first scene establishes a generational divide between the father, a rural farmer, and the Americanized son who aspires to be a musician. It is a result of this discord that the young disobedient son departs for Mexico City.

Music plays a prominent role throughout the film and serves to move the plot forward. For example, Tin Tan and his trustful sidekick Marcelo Fortuna frequent a large working class club, where they end up getting drunk. With a plethora of empty bottles at their table and thoroughly intoxicated Tin Tan and Marcelo, with the accompaniment of the mariachi, play the song "El hijo desobediente." Tin Tan changes the protagonists of the song from "mancebos" (youth) to pachucos. This seemingly innocuous gesture makes the pachuco synonymous with any disobedient son. The party ends abruptly when a waitress brings Tin Tan and Marcelo the bill. After much confusion, Tin Tan and Marcelo are taken to the delegation for not paying. The official in charge asks Tin Tan to identify himself. He claims to be the famous Mexican singer Jorge Negrete. Although fined, Tin Tan insists that he is Jorge Negrete. Frustrated, the official demands that Tin Tan "prove it." Tin Tan happily obeys: with the accompaniment of the mariachi he belts out the song "Cocula." If in the previous song, Tin Tan interjects the pachuco into a Mexican narrative, in

this song the pachuco adopts the persona of Jorge Negrete, the quintessential Mexican "charro" (cowboy).

The climax and resolution of the film occurs at the night club El Patio. This time Tin Tan and Marcelo sing sober and for a paycheck. Tin Tan's girlfriend and his father eagerly sit in the audience. After telling a joke, the young musician proceeds to sing "a song that is truly 'chicanota:' 'Allá en el rancho grande'" (There on the big ranch). There is some debate about the origins of the term "Chicano," but many scholars argue that before the Chicano movement it referred to Mexican laborers. Thus, by describing the song as "chicanota," Tin Tan locates it north of the U.S.-Mexico border. In various parts of the song Tin Tan prolongs notes for comic relief and after one line he yells, "yippee pe, wahoo." This upsets Marcelo because "Allá en el rancho grande," he claims, is one hundred percent Mexican, yet Tin Tan yells as if it were a "ranchera" from the southern part of the United States. For Tin Tan, however, this song is malleable and the rhythm and "grito" (cry) change depending on where it lands. After this discussion, they perform the song in various styles and end with "American style:" a faster version, which includes some scat singing. As soon as the song ends, the father turns to Tin Tan's girlfriend and tells her that she does not know how lucky she is and that Tin Tan was made in the "United States of Mexico."

Throughout the film Tin Tan interjects pachucos into Mexico's most iconic songs. The larger plot entails a pachuco gaining acceptance from the Mexican public and the reconciliation between father and son. The father, a traditional farmer from rural Mexico accepts and celebrates his son's urban cultural practices and ultimately identity. This reconciliation is not so much of father and son, but of two archetypes: the traditional rural ranchero and urban pachuco, thus making the practices of "Mexican American" youth from Los Angeles and the U.S.-Mexico border compatible with Mexican identity. If Tin Tan was more "authentic" than other Mexican comedians

who performed as pachucos, it was not because he looked more like them or resided in the borderlands, but because he used popular culture to criticize and trouble established notions of Mexican identity. By combining English and Spanish, on one hand, and African American as well as Anglo-American cultural practices, on the other, he grounded Mexican identity not in an imagined purified and heroic past but rather in its hybrid present, one set along its linguistic, cultural, and national borders.

Film was a particularly important medium to articulate these more expansive ideas of Mexican culture. From the mid-1930s to 1950s, Mexican film experienced tremendous growth and was consumed throughout the Americas. In fact, during this period, filmmaking was one of Mexico's most important industries. This explains not just Tin Tan's popularity, but the amount of criticism he received. Jóse Vasconcelos, in an article for *Novedades* in July of 1944, claimed that Tin Tan was corrupting the Spanish language and negatively influencing the youth.[18] Alejandro Quijano of the Spanish Language Academy and Carlos Denegri of Excelsior joined the chorus against Tin Tan. According to an article in *Newsweek*, the academy created a list of Spanish words to substitute for the "pochismos" used by Tin Tan.[19] In her 1950 article for *Mexico Cinema*, Paulita Brook described Tin Tan's persona as "apochado" and "anti-mexicano."[20]

Octavio Paz's description of pachucos in the *The Labyrinth of Solitude* is perhaps one of the most criticized interpretations of Mexican American zoot suit culture. In his introductory chapter, "The Pachuco and Other Extremes," first published in 1949 in *Cuadernos Americanos,*

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18 There is some evidence that the youth did adopt Tin Tan's use of language, which would also us to link negative responses not just to "representation" but actual cultural practices. See José Emiliano Pacheco, *Battles in the Desert and Other Stories,* trans., Katherine Silver (Mexico City: Ediciones Era, 1981, 1987).
19 "Gringo Lingo" *Newsweek* August 14, 1944, 76.
20 Quoted in *Las Musas de Tin Tan: cronicas y recuerdos*, ed Fernando Castillo Muñoz (México: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1999), 8.

Paz claimed that pachucos were ashamed of and divorced from their origins.[21] Their style, behavior, and attitudes reflected a desire to flaunt their difference. The pachuco, in short, was "an orphan lacking both protectors and positive values…"[22] If this metaphor fits with other views of pachucos and the meaning of the word pocho, the following quote troubles any straightforward reading of Paz:

> in suffering persecution, he becomes his true self, his supremely naked self, as a pariah, a man who belongs nowhere. The circle that began with provocation has completed itself and he is ready now for redemption, for entrance into the society that rejected him. He has been its sin and its scandal, but now that he is a victim it recognizes him at last for what he really is: its product, its son. At last he has found new parents.[23]

In another instance, Paz praised their rebellion:

> I recognized myself in the pachucos and in their rebellion against their present and their past. A rebellion that ended not as an idea but in a gesture. The underdog's option: the aesthetic application of defeat, the revenge of imagination.[24]

Octavio Paz used the metaphor of the orphan to describe pachucos' distance from Mexico. However, Paz's interpretation is also connected to Tin Tan's pachuco. For Paz, it was only through rebellion, either against Mexican values and norms or the father, that the pachuco found a new home. The location of that new home might have been different for Paz and Tin Tan, but they both used a similar language to discuss pachucos' cultural practices, identity, and place in the Mexican nation. Lastly, however we decided to read Paz, the debate about pachuco identity in Mexico City and the contemporary popularity and celebration of Tin Tan's pachuco reveal the lasting impact of "Mexican American;s"

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[21] "The Pachuco and Other Extremes," the first chapter of *Labyrinth of Solitude,* was first published in 1949 in *Cuadernos Americanos*. See Octavio Paz, *Itinerary: An intellectual journey*, trans. Jason Wilson (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1999), 120.
[22] Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico,* trans. Lysander Kemp (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 15.
[23] Ibid., 14.
[24] Paz, *Itinerary,* 17.

cultural practices on the "motherland."[25] Indeed, practices formed abroad, to borrow from Juan Flores, stretch "the meaning of national belonging."[26]

Conclusion

By following migrant families across the U.S.-Mexico border this dissertation bridges and contributes to Chicano/a historiography and scholarship on Mexican nation building after the Mexican revolution. By including migrant families into the process of Mexican nation-building after the Mexican Revolution, I integrate a set of historical actors that have generally been excluded from Mexican historiography. In doing so, I show that migrants not only practiced Mexican citizenship in the United States, but that they were central to negotiating how it was practiced. By placing migrants and migrant children within this context, this dissertation offers a transnational reading of Chicano/a history, one that is not marked by linear narratives of migration and settlement. Mexican citizenship, for example, reveals that consuls were not just "good" or "bad," but actual sites of nation building. By making claims to citizenship, migrant children born in the United States were able to secure educational rights in the United States and Mexico. U.S.-born repatriates also made claims to U.S. citizenship while in Mexico. Rather than passive victims, the first mixed-status migrant families of the twentieth century used all of the available informal and formal resources to practice U.S. and Mexican citizenship and navigate their place in Greater Mexico. This is a struggle that continues into the present. On both sides of the border, undocumented youth raised in the United States and migrant parents fight to shift how we define citizenship and belonging.

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[25] For more on the contemporary use and celebration of Tin Tan's pachuco see Romeo Guzmán, "Tin Tan" in *Iconic Mexico: An Encyclopedia from Acapulco to Zócalo*, ed. Eric Zolov (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2015).

[26] Juan Flores, *The Diaspora Strikes Back: Caribeño Tales of Learning and Turning* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

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